The Doctrines and Dogmas of Mormonism

Examined and Refuted

By

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CHAPTER XXXII.

MORMON POLYGAMY—WAS JOSEPH SMITH ITS AUTHOR?

Mormon polygamy—Was Joseph Smith its author?—Became public soon after the prophet's death—Joseph's power over his people—An illustration—"Thou shalt give heed to all his words"—Doctrine and Covenants accepted—Polygamy practiced before Joseph's death—Questioned only by the Reorganized Church—The son guards the good name of his father—Polygamy a gradual growth—Book of Mormon condemns the doctrine—Early suspicions—Charged with polygamy in 1835—Article on marriage—Does not exclude the practice—One man one wife—One woman but one husband—John C. Bennett—The secret wife system—Trouble between Smith and Bennett—The Nauvoo Legion—A sham battle.

That polygamy early became a tenet of the Mormon Church is a fact too well established to require proof. That it was taught and practiced in Nauvoo, Illinois, and other places before the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, in June, 1844, is equally apparent; but where it was first suggested, or by whom, is not so clear. Whether justly so or not, Joseph Smith has ever, until in recent years, been charged with being its author.

The writer has had ample opportunity to observe the practical workings of the system under the auspices of two different and widely separated Mormon churches, namely, Lyman Wight, in Texas, in 1847, and James J. Strang, of Beaver Island, Mich., in 1854.

Lyman Wight was one of Joseph's trusted apostles. He believed in nothing and in nobody quite as firmly as he believed in the prophet, in whom he reposed

the utmost confidence. While the prophet lived "Brother Lyman" would do nothing without his approval, and would dare anything Joseph Smith counseled him to undertake. The following characteristic remark serves to illustrate the blind confidence this apostle reposed in his leader. One occasion, while extolling the virtues of the prophet, Lyman Wight said:

"Why, brethren, I know Joseph Smith was a prophet of God; and if he had told me to go to hell on horseback and preach to the 'spirits in prison,' I should have started at once, believing it to be the will of God."

This well illustrates the power which Joseph Smith exercised over the vast majority of his followers. Men who would not submit to the prophet's will, and especially when that will was expressed in the form of a revelation from God, as most of his principal schemes were, sooner or later sought a more genial atmosphere and withdrew from the church, as did Oliver Cowdery, the Whitmer's, the Laws, and other prominent men of the church.

Immediately after the church was organized on April 6, 1830, Joseph, in order to secure and retain the absolute control of all matters pertaining to the church, received the following revelation

"Behold, there shall be a record kept among you, and in it thou shalt be called a seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ, an elder of the church through the will of God the Father, and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ. Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed to all his words, and commandments, which he shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me;"
was questioned by the people of the Reorganized Church, of which Joseph Smith, son of the prophet, is the president. If his father was in no way responsible for the introduction of a practice into the church which would stain the fair name of both his family and the church, it is eminently proper that a devoted son should do all in his power to repel the calumny and place the responsibility where it rightfully belongs.

And, on the other hand, had Joseph Smith either from the volitions of his own nature, or through the overweening influence of wicked and designing men, been led into error and sin, it is but natural that the son should seek, in an honorable way, to parry the fatal blow, and let it fall as lightly as possible upon the heads of the innocent. For doing this President Smith will not be censured by fair-minded people, for in doing so he is but pursuing a course which would be adopted by almost anybody else under like circumstances. From a long personal acquaintance with President Smith I take great pleasure in saying I regard him as a most excellent and sincere Christian gentleman, and worthy of the respect and esteem of all good people. If he believed his father to have been the author of the infamous revelation on polygamy, he possesses both moral courage and Christian manhood to denounce it in the roundest terms, and would neither by word nor deed seek to justify even his father, whose memory he holds sacred, in the introduction of a doctrine alike soul-destroying to men and dishonoring to God.

It matters not what the father may have done, for his deeds the son must not be held responsible. Eating sour grapes can no longer set the children's teeth on edge. We live in an age of progress, and of individual responsibility.

In the discussion of this question I shall endeavor to present such facts as are in my possession, together with my personal observations, and let the reader judge for himself as to whether Joseph Smith, Jr., was the author of Mormon polygamy.

A GRADUAL GROWTH.

Mormon polygamy did not spring suddenly into existence, as a tenet of the church, but, like many other ideas and dogmas of the Saints, it was an afterthought, if not an evolution. The seed from which the pernicious weed sprang, was certainly planted after the publication of the Book of Mormon, in which it is most strongly denounced, as will appear from the following:

“Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord. . . . Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken unto the word of the Lord: for there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines you shall have none: for I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women.” (B. of M., Jacob, chapter 2, page 127.)

Joseph Smith here represents his ideal Nephites as seeking to justify themselves in the practice of polygamy on the ground that David and Solomon had many wives and concubines; but the good prophet Jacob assured them that it was an abomination in the Lord's sight, and ever had been; and that God would not tolerate the evil. How Latter Day Saints, while professing to believe in the divinity of the Book of Mormon, could so soon lose sight of its teachings
and endorse a principle so clearly antagonistic to its precepts, is one of the anomalies of Mormonism, and shows that the word of a so-called inspired prophet has a vastly greater influence over Latter Day Saints than does the written Word of God.

At just what period this excessiveness of Mormonism appeared and became the dream of its leaders, may never be known; but of one thing we are quite sure, and that is the Saints were at an early date reproached by their enemies, as they deemed the people of all other churches, with "the crime of fornication and polygamy." What gave rise to this reproach is very largely a matter of conjecture; but it is probable that something either in their teachings or their conduct (probably the latter) led people, who viewed things from the outside, to believe that the lives of their leaders were not as pure as the title, "Latter Day Saints," would lead one to suppose them to be. This feeling was, no doubt, materially intensified by the strong prejudices of the people generally, but that their suspicions were wholly groundless, subsequent developments forbid us to believe.

A prejudice nearly as strong as that which existed against the Saints was also fostered by other denominations towards the Disciples of Christ, a denomination of Christians which had its rise about the same time, under the leadership of Alexander Campbell; yet these people were never reproached with the crime of polygamy, or any other form of vice and immorality. Hence, we feel warranted in the belief that had there been nothing in the conduct of the Saints to give rise to such suspicions, no such charges of immorality would ever have been made. And then again, had there been no foundation in fact for these charges, it is altogether probable the sentiment would ultimately have died out, and polygamy among the Mormons would never have become one of the established facts of history. But since the belief of their guilt only grew stronger with the passing years; and since polygamy became an acknowledged fact in Mormon history as early as 1843, it amounts to a very strong presumptive evidence that the charge so early made against the Saints had its foundation in fact. They were charged with polygamy at as early a day as August, 1835, as may be seen from the following article on marriage:

"MARRIAGE."

1. According to the custom of all civilized nations, marriage is regulated by laws and ceremonies; therefore we believe that all marriages in this Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose; and that the solemnization should be performed by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder or priest, not even prohibiting those persons who are desirous to get married of being married by other authority. We believe that it is not right to prohibit members of this church from marrying out of the church if it be their determination to do so, but such persons will be considered weak in the faith of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

2. Marriage should be celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving; and at the solemnization, the persons to be married, standing together, the man on the right, and the woman on the left, shall be addressed by the person officiating, as he shall be directed by the Holy Spirit; and if there be no legal objections, he
shall say, calling each by their names: 'You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives.' And when they have answered 'Yes,' he shall pronounce them 'husband and wife' in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the laws of the country and authority vested in him: 'May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen.'

"3. The clerk of every church should keep a record of all marriages solemnized in his branch.

"4. All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church should be held sacred and fulfilled. Inasmuch as this Church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication and polygamy: we declare that we believe that one man should have one wife, and one woman but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again. It is not right to persuade a woman to be baptized contrary to the will of her husband, neither is it lawful to influence her to leave her husband. All children are bound by law to obey their parents; and to influence them to embrace any religious faith, or to be baptized, or to leave their parents without their consent, is unlawful and unjust. We believe that husbands, parents and masters who exercise control over their wives, children and servants and prevent them from embracing the truth, will have to answer for that sin." (Smith's History, Vol. 1, pages 575-6. Also Doc. and Cov., Sec. 111, page 329.)

This article on marriage—which I have quoted entire—was presented before a "General Assembly" at Kirtland, Ohio, August 17, 1835, and by the action of that body became one of the articles of church government, and was ordered printed as a part of the "Doctrine and Covenants" of the church.

This article shows that at that early day the church had been charged with "the crime of fornication and polygamy." The adoption and publication of this article on marriage was designed to serve the two-fold purpose of refuting the charges of polygamy, and at the same time counteract the influence of the charge upon the public mind. Upon its face, the article, especially that portion which includes the marriage ceremony, seems absolutely to prohibit polygamy; and yet, strange to say, this identical ceremony has been employed in every polygamous marriage performed in the endowment house in Salt Lake City during the palmy days of Brigham Young, and, in fact, by every other polygamous branch of the Mormon Church.

Upon the surface there seems no possible loophole to admit polygamy, but upon a careful examination it will be seen that such is not the case. Let us examine the document a little more closely.

Why should all marriages be "solemnized in a public meeting," or a feast prepared for that purpose, which is also public? Clearly it was for the purpose of creating the impression that no secret marriages ever had been or ever would be performed with the approval of the church. All polygamous marriages, up to the time of the exodus to Utah, were of necessity performed in secret, in order to evade the punishment which the law of every State prescribed.

Church clerks were to make a record of every mar-
riage performed in the manner described, but of clandestine marriages he could make no record, not having legal knowledge that such marriage had been performed.

Again, you may have observed the ingenious phraseology of that part of the document which is designed to convey the impression that the assembly, as well as the entire church, was opposed to polygamy, but which, as a matter of fact, leaves the way open for its introduction and practice. The language I refer to is this:

"We believe that one man shall have one wife; and one woman but one husband." Why use the restrictive adverb in the case of the woman, and ingeniously omit it with reference to the man? Why not employ the same form of words in the one case as in the other? Of the woman it is said she shall have but one husband. Why not say of the man, he shall have "but one wife, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again." We repeat the question with emphasis, Why not restrict the man to one wife in the same manner that the woman is restricted to one husband? The reason seems obvious.

As we have already stated, polygamy was a plant whose seed was rather slow to germinate, but which soon sprang into vigorous life when once its head was above ground. As early as October, 1842, the existence of what was called the "secret wife system," was made public at Nauvoo, III., through the apostasy of Gen. John C. Bennett, who was about that time expelled from the church. General Bennett was a man of prominence in the church, and a personal friend of Joseph Smith's up to within a short time before the trouble originated which separated them.

Just what caused the difficulty I have never been able to learn, but that it was of a very grave character may be seen from the history of those times.

The "Nauvoo Legion," of which Joseph Smith was the General-in-Chief, was said to be the finest military organization in the State of Illinois. On the 9th of May, 1842, the Legion was on parade, and was reviewed by "Lieutenant-General Joseph Smith, who commanded through the day." There were present at this grand review of the Legion a number of prominent men, among whom were Judge Stephen A. Douglas, of Illinois, and James Arlington Bennett, of the New York Herald. "In the afternoon the Legion was separated into cohorts, and fought an animated sham battle," during which General John C. Bennett commanded. Concerning the incident that occurred on this occasion, Tullidge, Joseph's historian, says:

"But a somewhat startling view is also brought to light in the significant fact that Gen. John C. Bennett repeatedly requested the Prophet to take part in the sham battle, urging him in one instance to command the first cohort in person, without his staff."

(Tullidge's History, page 394.)

The interpretation which the prophet put upon the conduct of Gen. Bennett, is shown by his own words, as follows:

"If General Bennett's true feelings towards me are not made manifest to the world in a very short time, then it may be possible that the gentle breathings of that Spirit, which whispered me on parade that there was mischief concealed in that sham battle, were false. A short time will determine the point. Let John C. Bennett answer at the day of
judgment: Why did you request me to command one of the cohorts, and also to take my position without my staff during the sham battle on the 7th of May, 1842, where my life might have been the forfeit, and no man have known who did the deed?” (Ibid, page 395.)

CHAPTER XXXIII.

SIDE-LIGHTS.

Side-lights—A. H. Smith on polygamy—Those certificates—Dr. Bennett’s apostasy—He divulges the secret wife system—Joseph denies—Hiram Brown cut off from the church—Hiram Smith denies—Denials examined—Priesthood and polygamy—Testimony of William Marks—Joseph Smith knew polygamy existed—A thus saith the Lord would have stopped it—Joseph alone responsible.

The following historic facts throw a strong side-light upon the trouble between Joseph Smith and General Bennett. In a tract against polygamy, by Alexander H. Smith, an apostle of the Reorganized Church, the writer quotes from the Times and Seasons, the official organ of the church of which his father, Joseph Smith, was at the time editor, to show that polygamy was not a tenet of the church at the time of the prophet’s death.

One of the objects in making the quotations is stated by Mr. Smith as follows:

“To rebut some affidavits of some who have sworn that a different marriage ceremony [from that given in the article on Marriage, already quoted] was known and practiced as early as 1840.” (Polygamy, Was it an Original Tenet of the Church? by A. H. Smith, page 5).

But the documents quoted, so far from proving what he undertakes to establish, only serve to confirm the rumors which had been currently circulated for several years concerning the secret existence of
being practiced in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, save the one contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants; and we give this certificate to the public, to show that J. C. Bennett's secret wife system is a disclosure of his own make.

Emma Smith, President.
Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Counselor.
Sarah M. Cleveland, Counselor.
Eliza R. Snow, Secretary.
Mary C. Miller. Catherine Petty.
Lois Cutler. Sarah Higbee.
Thyrsa Cahoon. Phebe Woodruff.
Ann Hunter. Leonora Taylor.
Jane Law. Sarah Hillman.
Sophia R. Marks. Rosannah Marks.
Polly Z. Johnson. Angeline Robinson.
Abigail Works.”—(Ibid, pages 5 and 6, as quoted from Times and Seasons, Vol. 3, page 939, for Oct. 1, 1842.)

From the foregoing it will be seen that General Bennett, having left the church, was the first to make a “disclosure” of the “secret wife system,” which is said to have existed since 1840. The statement of Dr. John C. Bennett, and others, was made under oath, and sets forth the fact that a “society” existed at Nauvoo, in which this “secret wife system” was practiced by the church leaders.

To counteract the effect produced upon the public mind by these affidavits, Joseph Smith published the entire article on marriage in the Times and Seasons, the official organ of the church, together with the certificates of twelve men and nineteen women. This array of witnesses would, under proper conditions, be quite sufficient to impeach Gen. John C. Bennett, et
al, but which, under the circumstances, is of no legal value whatever. Three serious objections to the testimony of these witnesses may be urged, as follows:

1. The witnesses were not under oath when they made their statements, and they were not sworn to afterwards, and hence are incompetent to impeach witnesses who have made a statement of alleged facts under oath.

2. Neither set of witnesses have shown themselves competent to testify upon the questions in issue.

3. The witnesses do not contradict the material facts set forth in the allegation of the affiants.

To render a witness competent to testify in a given case, it must appear that the witness knows something pertinent to the issue. An absence of knowledge upon the question in controversy does not, and in the very nature of the case cannot, render a witness competent to testify. The witnesses whose testimony is given above simply content themselves by certifying:

1. That they "know of no other rule or system of marriage than that contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants," but they do not assert that they are in position to know, and that another rule or system does not exist.

2. They do not certify and declare that no such "system" as that sworn to by Gen. Bennett and others did not at the time exist; but content themselves by saying, "we know of no such rule," and that "Dr. John C. Bennett's secret wife system is a disclosure of his own make," and that "we know of no such society in this place."

While these witnesses all agree that "Dr. Bennett's secret wife system" was a creature "of his own make," not one of them denies that he made it. It matters but little whether the "system" was originated by General John C. Bennett, or "Lieutenant-General Joseph Smith." That it existed is a fact established by the concurrent testimony of thirty-one leading men and women of the Mormon Church.

You will doubtless have observed that Joseph Smith, in the editorial quoted above, charges the system up to Gen. Bennett, saying that "Dr. J. C. Bennett's secret wife system is a matter of his own manufacture;" but many of these same witnesses, both men and women, have since declared that Gen. Joseph Smith was himself the author of the "system," which was afterwards known as the "spiritual wife system," or "celestial marriage," but in plain English, polygamy.

Several of the men whose names appear in the list of witnesses became noted advocates of polygamy. George Miller, also a general in the Nauvoo Legion, and the second man on the list, was a polygamist with two wives, when first I knew him in 1847, but five years after his testimony was made public, and only three years after the death of the prophet; and Wilford Woodruff, N. K. Whitney and John Taylor—and possibly others of less note—all became advocates of polygamy, and declare that Joseph received the "revelation" on "celestial marriage," only nine months later.

Of the women who testified, Miss Eliza R. Snow, the poetess of the church, in later years made affidavit that she had been Joseph's "spiritual wife," but whose statement I have been unable to obtain, but the sworn statements of two of the witnesses, namely, Ebenezer Robinson and his wife Angeline, will be given later.
I will now take up other matters presented by Apostle A. H. Smith, in his effort to prove that polygamy was not in any manner sanctioned by the prophet and patriarch up to within a few months of their death. It is but fair that I should state that President Joseph Smith and his two brothers, Alexander and David, the only living sons of the prophet, have, each in a well-written tract, placed themselves on record as being strongly opposed to polygamy, and stoutly maintain that their father was not, as has been charged, "the putative father of polygamy."

That the seeds of polygamy had, like the thistledown, spread far into adjacent territory, as early as February, 1842 (only four months after John C. Bennett’s disclosures) may be seen from the following:

"NOTICE.

"As we have been credibly informed that an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by the name of Hyrum Brown, has been preaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines in the county of Lapeer, State of Michigan, this is to notify him and the church in general, that he has been cut off from the church for his iniquity; and he is further notified to appear at the special conference on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges. Signed, Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith, presidents of said church." (Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, page 423, as quoted by A. H. Smith, in his tract on polygamy, page 6.)

While it is true that Joseph and Hyrum Smith in this public manner denounce "polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines," and summarily deal with Elder Brown for preaching it, yet it remains a fact that the doctrine was taught by an authorized representative of the church, which fairly raises the presumption that the said elder believed he had the right to teach the "secret wife system." The trouble was that Elder Brown preached it to the wrong party, and was reported to headquarters, and as a matter of course something had to be done to appease the wrath of an offended public.

The "secret wife system," or polygamy, could not be openly taught and practiced in the States, for the reason that the laws of the several States were specifically opposed to every form of bigamy, and would punish the offender with imprisonment in the penitentiary. If Joseph Smith was a party to what he calls "J. C. Bennett’s secret wife system," the only possible way he could escape public censure was to publicly condemn it, just as he did. But if he had no part nor lot in the matter, then it seems quite reasonable to conclude that no subsequent act or circumstance could have been coerced into even a seeming support of the theory of complicity in the nefarious transaction. Not only would he have denounced the abomination, but every subsequent act of his life would have given it the lie, and no friend of his, or of the cause for which he stood, would ever have been found to besmirch his name, or that of the church, by declaring him to be the author of a revelation enjoining its practice. But all the facts and circumstances immediately connected with the affair conspire to show that the prophet in some way lent his sanction to the evil, as we shall see a little later, all public denials to the contrary notwithstanding.

Alexander makes another quotation from the
church organ to prove that Joseph and Hyrum were not parties to the "secret wife system," as follows:

"NAUVOO, MARCH 8, 1844.

"To the brethren of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, living on Chama Creek, in Hancock County, Greeting: Whereas, Brother Richard Hewitt has call on me to-day to know my views concerning some doctrines that are preached in your place, and states to me that some of your elders say that a man having a certain priesthood may have as many wives as he pleases, and that that doctrine is taught here, I say unto you that that man teaches false doctrine, for there is no such doctrine taught here, neither is there any such thing practiced here. Any man that is found teaching, privately or publicly, any such doctrine is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the high council, and lose his license and membership also; therefore, he had better beware what he is about.

"HYRUM SMITH."

(Times and Seasons, Vol. 5, page 474. Also quoted by A. H. Smith, pages 6 and 7.)

In the above quotation I have italicized some of the words, in order to invite the reader's special attention to their import. The people of the Reorganized Church regard this as an unreserved denial by Hyrum Smith that the doctrine of polygamy was either taught or practiced in Nauvoo at that time.

That the doctrine in Hyrum Smith's mind at the time he wrote is most positively denied by him, as being taught in Nauvoo, is certainly true; and it is also a fact that he does not say polygamy, or "spiritual marriage" is not taught or practiced there. He says with emphasis, "no such doctrine is taught here." No such doctrine as what? Polygamy? Not a word of the kind! The doctrine Hyrum Smith referred to, and which he so vehemently denounced, is this: that a man holding a certain priesthood, may have as many wives as he pleases. That doctrine was denied; and that doctrine was not taught in Nauvoo. This could be strictly true, and yet polygamy may flourish as the green bay tree. As a matter of fact, such a doctrine was probably never taught in Nauvoo, nor yet in Salt Lake City, by Brigham Young, or on Beaver Island, by James J. Strang. Priesthood was never taken into consideration. The number of a man's wives was never limited to the grade of his priesthood. This, and nothing more, is what Hyrum Smith denied.

Hence, the patriarch's statement can never be tortured into a denial of polygamy. It is exactly what it was intended to be when penned by the writer, namely, an ingenious evasion of the truth, as it was known to exist at that very moment, as I shall hereafter show.

Notwithstanding all the so-called denials of the existence of polygamy in the Mormon Church, the doctrine continued to spread until the time of the prophet's death.

Only three months after Hyrum Smith published his "denial" that polygamy was either taught or practiced at Nauvoo, Joseph had an interview with President William Marks, in which he admitted that polygamy was practiced, and that it would eventually prove the overthrow of the church, unless it was speedily put down. Following is a certified copy of Elder Mark's statement as copied from the files of The Saint's Herald, Lamoni, Iowa, but through an
inadvertency of the writer, the volume and number were not given, but this is immaterial. Following is Secretary Stebbin's letter:

"LAMONI, IOWA, July 5, 1895.

"Bro. D. H. Bays, Hastings, Mich: I regret the delay in writing to you, but have been busy and have not written as early as I intended to do. The following is a copy of the writing of Elder William Marks that you ask for:

"'OPPOSITION TO POLYGAMY BY THE PROPHET JOSEPH.'

"'About the first of June, 1884, situated as I was at that time, being the Presiding Elder of the Stake at Nauvoo, and, by appointment, the presiding officer of the High Council, I had a very good opportunity to know the affairs of the church, and my convictions at that time were that the church, in a great measure, had departed from the pure principles and doctrine of Jesus Christ. I felt much troubled in mind about the condition of the church. I prayed earnestly to my Heavenly Father to show me something in regard to it, when I was wrapt in vision and it was shown me by the Spirit that the top or branches had overcome the root in sin and wickedness, and that the only way to cleanse and purify it was to disorganize it, and in due time the Lord would reorganize it again. There were many other things suggested to my mind, but the lapse of time has erased them from my memory.

"'A few days after this occurrence I met with Bro. Joseph. He said that he wanted to converse with me on the affairs of the church, and we retired by ourselves. I will give his words verbatim, for they were indelibly stamped upon my mind. He said that he

had desired for a long time to talk with me on the subject of polygamy. He said it would eventually prove the overthrow of the church, and we should be obliged to leave the United States, unless it could speedily be put down. He was satisfied that it was a cursed doctrine, and there must be every exertion made to put it down. He said that he would go before the congregation and proclaim against it, and I must go to the High Council, and he would prefer charges against those in transgression, and I must sever them from the church unless they made ample satisfaction. There was much more said, but this was the substance.

"'The mob commenced to gather about Carthage a few days after, therefore nothing was done concerning it. After the prophet's death I made mention of this conversation to several, hoping and believing that it would have a good effect; but, to my great disappointment, it was soon rumored about that Bro. Marks was about to apostatize, and that all he said about the conversation with the prophet was a tissue of lies.

"'From that time I was satisfied that the church would be disorganized, and the death of the prophet and patriarch tended to confirm me in that opinion. From that time I was looking for a reorganization of the church and kingdom of God. I am thankful that I have lived to again behold the day when the basis of the church is the revelations of Jesus Christ, which is the only sure foundation to build upon. I feel to invite all my brethren to become identified with us, for the Lord is truly in our midst.'

"Dated Shabbona, DeKalb County, Illinois, Oct. 23, 1850, and signed,

WILLIAM MARKS.
"If you receive this all right, please inform me by
return mail. Your friend and well-wisher,

"H. A. Stebbins,
"Secretary of the Reorganized Church."

Believing it to be of some historic importance I
have given Elder Stebbins' letter in full.
From this communication of Elder Marks we glean
the following facts.
1. That about June 1, 1844, only about three weeks
before the death of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, polyg-
any, or the "secret wife system," (divulged two years
previously by Dr. John C. Bennett) had taken such
deep root in the Mormon Church that the prophet
himself became alarmed, lest they should be driven
from the United States in consequence of it.
2. That the spirit of the doctrine had so permeated
the entire church as to cause it to depart from the
pure principles of the doctrine of Christ.
3. That the top had overcome the root "in sin and
wickedness." That is to say, the leaders, through
their licentious indulgences had corrupted and over-
powered the membership of the church.
4. That it had reached such immense proportions
as to render secrecy longer impossible.
5. That the leaders were all so imbued with the
spirit of polygamy that the statement of Elder Marks
concerning the prophet's mode of procedure, had he
lived, was denounced as "a tissue of lies."

In view of these facts it is simply impossible that
this monster of iniquity could have developed to such
gigantic proportions under the very eyes of Joseph
Smith, wholly unobserved by him. It requires a re-
markable degree of credulity to believe that a man of
the prophet's native mental astuteness was blind to
the facts as they were known to exist. It is equally
incredible that an evil of this character could have
grown up without at least the tacit approval of the
prophet, for the reason that his word was at that
time, and ever had been, both law and Gospel to the
entire people, leaders and all.

They had long since bound themselves, as we have
already seen, to "give heed unto all his words, . . .
for his words ye shall receive, as if from mine [the
Lord's] own mouth." Hence, a "thus saith the
Lord" from the prophet would have put an eternal
quietus on the question of polygamy. But it never
came; and so Joseph Smith, and Joseph Smith only,
must be held responsible for the prevalence of the
most abominable system that ever cursed and de-
graded a free people.

Instead of getting a "revelation" absolutely and
peremptorily prohibiting polygamy, and thus lay the
foundation of a pure society, he received one enjoin-
ing a practice under the penalty of eternal damnation,
which served to drag the people of his church down
to a moral level far below that of the heathen
nations of the earth. In the following chapter we
give the document in its entirety, although somewhat
lengthy, that the reader may be able to judge of its
merits and origin.
CHAPTER XXXIV.

REVELATION ON CELESTIAL MARRIAGE, GIVEN TO JOSEPH SMITH, NAUVOO, JULY 12, 1843.

Revelation on celestial marriage—Joseph, Smith its author—A house of order—If any man marry him a wife—For time and all eternity—Passing the angels and the gods—Then shall they be gods—All manner of sins and blasphemies shall be forgiven—Shedding innocent blood the unpardonable sin—Abraham's wives—Sarah and Hagar—Isaac and Jacob—David and Solomon—Sealed on earth and sealed in heaven—Emma Smith—Must accept the celestial law or be destroyed—if a man espouse a virgin—if he espouse another he is justified—if he have ten virgins given him—The original wife—She must procure other wives for her lord, or be destroyed—Will reveal more hereafter—Mrs. Stenhouse—Celestial law, indeed!—Joseph must have written it.

1. VERILY, thus saith the Lord unto you, my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have enquired of my hand, to know and understand whereby I, the Lord, justified Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines: Behold! and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter: Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same; for behold! I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not in that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant, and be permitted to enter into my glory; for all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as was instituted from before the foundation of the world: and as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant it was instituted for the fullness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fullness thereof, must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

2. And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations or expectations that are not made and entered into, and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy by revelation and commandment, through the medium of mine anointed whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power, (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred) are of no efficacy, virtue or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end, have an end when men are dead.

3. Behold! mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion. Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name? Or, will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed? And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you before the world was? I am the Lord thy God, and I give unto you this commandment, that no man shall come unto the Father but me, or by my word which
virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him, therefore he is justified. But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfill the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world; and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified.

25: And again, verily, verily I say unto you, if any man have a wife who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe, and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God; for I will destroy her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law. Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not minister unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor; and he is exempt from the law of Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law, when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife. And now, as pertaining unto this law, verily, verily I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you hereafter; therefore, let this suffice for the present. Behold, I am Alpha and Omega. Amen.” (See Millennial Star, January, 1853.)

After quoting the more important parts of the above document in her work (omitting only such portions as had no special reference to the question,) Mrs. Stenhouse comments thus:

"And this was the 'revelation!'—this mass of confusion, cunning, absurdity, falsehood and bad grammar! This was the celebrated document which was henceforth to be the law to the confiding men and women who had embraced Mormonism! Looking at it now, noting its inconsistencies and its flagrant outrage upon common decency and morality, I can hardly credit that I should ever have been such a silly dupe as to give it a second thought. And yet, what could I do? . . . Unquestioning obedience, we had been taught, was the highest virtue; rebellion was as the sin of witchcraft. I had been convinced of the truth of some of the tenets of the Mormon faith, and confident in them, I accepted without question all the rest. . . . The 'revelation' aroused within me feelings of horror and dismay, but I did not dare to question its authenticity.” (Tell it All, pages 138 and 139.)

I have italicized the last clause in the closing sentence, in order to call attention to a sentiment that at the time prevailed throughout the entire Mormon Church. None dared to question what the prophet declared in the name of the Lord, it mattered not how soul-crushing or absurd it may have been. Of all the "revelations" that Joseph Smith ever received, this one "caps the climax." As to the spirit and tone of the document I have nothing to say; it speaks for itself, and is doubtless the most damnable, soul-destroying, woman-oppressing, happiness-crushing system of marriage that man, in his most de-
Who does not know that a man possessing such absolute control over his people as that exercised by Joseph Smith could have extirpated the evil with a single stroke of his pen? Who is so blind as not to see that a "thus saith the Lord" from the prophet (in whom the entire people had unlimited confidence) condemning the system in terms as strong and positive as those employed to enjoin its observance, would at once have crushed the life out of the monster, and saved his people from ruin and shame? No, sir! it is impossible that Joseph and Hyrum Smith are innocent of this great crime against the womanhood of America, and the society of a cultivated and refined nation.
CHAPTER XXXV.

SPRING FROM THE SAME ROOT.

Sprang from the same root—Shedding innocent blood—Evil and obscene practices—Who was their author—Fruit of the Mormon tree—History of the polygamy revelation—What Emma Smith says about it—Interviewed by her son—Her statement proves—Her testimony does not agree with that of Elder Marks—Brigham Young’s testimony—A copy of the revelation preserved by Brigham—Published in 1852—The Laws and Fosters—Nauvoo Expositor destroyed—The prophet arrested—Affidavits of Ebenezer Robinson and who—Hyrum Smith taught them polygamy.

Nearly all the corrupt doctrines and murderous practices which later matured in Salt Lake City, including “blood-atonement,” or human sacrifice, killing “apostates” and murdering defenseless Gentiles—such, for instance, as the wholesale murder at Mountain Meadows—are but enlargements upon the doctrines of this revelation. Every sin known to the catalogue of crime, except to commit murder “wherein ye shed innocent blood,” should be forgiven, according to the terms of the “new and everlasting covenant”; and the leaders were to be the sole judges as to the meaning of the term “innocent blood.” Nothing but this one sin could prevent a man who had entered into this “covenant” from “passing by the gods and angels,” and “entering his exaltation” in the world to come.

The spirit of this “celestial law”—polygamy and eternal hatred of the Gentiles—permeated every branch and faction of the Mormon Church which
sprang up immediately after the death of the prophet. Not only the "Brighamites," but the followers of James J. Strang, of Beaver Island, Lyman Wright, of Texas, and Sidney Rigdon, of Pennsylvania, were all filled to the point of saturation with the very essence of this abominable doctrine. All the evil and obscene practices which have combined to render Mormonism odious, and mark the very name as the synonym of all evil, are directly traceable to the authority of this hateful document.

Where did all these evil practices by different bodies, separated by thousands of miles, originate? Who was their author? Whence came this law common to them all? How came this perfect agreement between these different factions upon these peculiarities of Mormonism, only three years after the prophet's death? There can be but one answer, and that is, they had unquestionably sprung from the same fountain—they were the legitimate fruits of the Mormon tree, and the revelation of July 12, 1843. And this but illustrates the old proverb, "Actions speak louder than words." As to the authorship of this unique document, there hardly seems room for but one opinion. The careful reader can scarcely fail to detect the earmarks of Joseph Smith in almost every paragraph of this "law of celestial marriage."

The history of this remarkable document seems to be about as follows:

The "revelation" is said to have been written by William Clayton, Joseph's private secretary, as the words fell from the lips of the prophet, and was carefully copied, while the document was in the possession of Bishop N. K. Whitney, Joseph's particular friend. The original, it is claimed, was afterwards burnt by Emma Smith, the prophet's wife, who used the tongs in committing it to the flames, unwilling, as any pure woman would be, to have her fingers come in contact with the vile document.

This statement, however, if not even the existence of such a "revelation," Emma Smith denied a short time before her death, April 30, 1879, as may be seen by the following questions and answers:

**Question**, by President Joseph Smith to his mother: "What about the revelation on polygamy? Did Joseph Smith have anything like it? What of spiritual wifery?"

**Answer.** "There was no revelation on either polygamy or spiritual wives. There were some rumors of something of the sort, of which I asked my husband. He assured me that all there was of it, was that in a chat about plural wives he had said, 'Well, such a system might be, if everybody was agreed to it, and would behave as they should; but they would not; and besides, it was contrary to the will of heaven.' No such thing as polygamy, or spiritual wifery, was taught publicly or privately before my husband's death, that I have now, or ever had, any knowledge of."

**Question.** "Did he not have other wives than yourself?"

**Answer.** "He had no other wife but me; nor did he to my knowledge ever have."

**Question.** "Did he not hold marital relation with women other than yourself?"

**Answer.** "He did not have improper relations with any woman that ever came to my knowledge."

**Question.** "Was there nothing about spiritual wives that you recollect?"
Answer. "At one time my husband came to me and asked me if I had heard certain rumors about spiritual marriages, or anything of the kind; and assured me that if I had, they were without foundation; that there was no such doctrine, and never should be with his knowledge or consent. I know that he had no other wife, or wives, than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise." (Tullidge’s History, pages 791, 792.)

Thus it will be seen that Mrs. Emma Smith, widow of the prophet, had no personal knowledge of the revelation on polygamy—she had heard rumors concerning the “revelation,” which, her husband assured her, had grown out of “a chat about plural wives,” in which he had remarked that “such a system might be, if everybody was agreed to it, and would behave as they should.”

Mrs. Smith was a lady of more than ordinary mental endowments, and possessed a reputation for honor and integrity that won the respect and esteem of those who knew her best. It is but fair to presume, therefore, that she stated the facts as she understood and recollected them, but having attained her seventy-fifth year, and her health having been poor for several years before her death, it is but natural to conclude that her memory would be somewhat defective. That rumors of “polygamy and spiritual wiﬁry” were aﬂoat at the time of her husband’s death she admitted; but that he had other wives than herself she did not believe. Of course it is just possible, if not indeed quite probable, that the exact truth was kept from her as far as possible, and that while the evil existed in fact, she was led to believe it existed only in theory—a mere "rumor."

Yet her statement proves, beyond all doubt, that there was some talk about this revelation on polygamy, or “spiritual wives,” previous to the time of Joseph Smith’s death, which is in perfect accord with the testimony of all who have ever said anything on the subject. When Mrs. Smith says that polygamy was not taught publicly, she states what is very probably true; but in saying it was never taught privately, she asserts what, in the very nature of the case, it was impossible for her to know; for the reason that it could have been privately taught while she would be totally ignorant of the fact. The most that can be affirmed of Mrs. Smith’s statement, therefore, is that polygamy was not taught publicly, and that she firmly believed it had not been taught privately.

But how does this agree with the statements of others who had better opportunities to know what was privately taught in Nauvoo relative to this question—that of Elder Marks, for instance, whose testimony we have already given. He was a man whose veracity was not to be questioned; and although a faithful member of the Reorganized Church, his testimony is never alluded to by any of its leading writers or speakers. Neither Joseph, Alexander nor David make any reference to it, although each of them is the author of a tract on polygamy. This fact may be regarded as very significant, indeed. It has the appearance of an evasion of the real issue. If Joseph Smith talked with Wm. Marks about polygamy, then polygamy had been taught, if not publicly, it was most certainly both taught and practiced secretly.

The testimony of the witnesses places the fact
beyond reasonable doubt that Joseph Smith knew polygamy existed, and the monster having got beyond his control he trembled for the possible results. We now wish to offer a little evidence produced from another quarter. Relative to the revelation in question, Brigham Young, in a discourse delivered in the Tabernacle, Salt Lake City, Aug. 29th, 1852, among other things said:

"You heard Brother Pratt state this morning that a revelation would be read this afternoon, which was given previous to Joseph's death. . . . The original copy of this revelation was burnt up. William Clayton was the man who wrote it from the mouth of the prophet. In the meantime it was in Bishop Whitney's possession. He wished the privilege to copy it, which Brother Joseph granted. Sister Emma burnt the original. The reason I mention this is because the people who did not know of the revelation suppose it is not now in existence. The revelation will be read to you. . . . This revelation has been in my possession many years; and who has known it? I keep a patent lock on my desk, and there does not anything leak out that should not." (Tullidge's History, page 565, 566).

Thus it will be seen that a copy of the original "revelation" (which is the common root from which all these polygamous branches of the Mormon Church simultaneously sprang), was received by Joseph Smith; written, as he uttered the words, by William Clayton; copied by Bishop Whitney, the prophet's particular friend; preserved under lock and key by Pres. Brigham Young, and publicly read by Apostle Orson Pratt in August, 1852.

The objection offered by the Reorganized Church, that this document was not made public till after the removal of the church to Salt Lake Valley, eight years after the prophet's death; and that it was probably manufactured out of whole cloth by Brigham Young and his followers in order to justify their general practice of polygamy, is certainly not justified by the facts.

Not only have Brigham Young and other leaders declared that Joseph Smith was the author of the revelation on "celestial marriage," but various members of the "high council," the highest judicial tribunal of the church, swear that the very document in question was read by Hyrum Smith before them while that body was in session in Nauvoo, Illinois, Aug. 12, 1843. These affidavits, together with those of several women who were the polygamous wives of both Joseph and Hyrum Smith, will appear in their proper place.

It is not sufficient to meet the testimony of all these witnesses with a bare denial. In order to render their testimony invalid the alleged facts must be met by the testimony of other witnesses, equally competent, to establish other facts which, in their very nature, render the testimony of plaintiff's witnesses highly improbable, and prove the alleged facts set up in the petition or proposition of the plaintiff to be impossible. This the Reorganized Church has never attempted, and which, indeed, it may fairly be presumed it cannot do.

The only witnesses ever introduced by the Reorganized Church, namely, Mrs. Emma Smith and William Marks, have both testified to facts which confirm rather than disprove the declarations of
Brigham Young and others concerning the existence of polygamy at the time of the prophet's death.

I shall now introduce the testimony of other witnesses to prove that the so-called 'denials' of Joseph and Hyrum Smith shortly before their death were mere subterfuges, behind which they hoped to shield their defenseless heads from the effects of the impending storm which was soon to break upon them. Just before the gathering of the mob at Carthage, which resulted in the violent death of the two leaders, there was another serious defection from the prophet, namely, the apostasy of the brothers, William and Wilson Law, the latter having been Major-General of the Nauvoo Legion, and the former a member of the "First Presidency," the highest quorum in the church; the Higbees, Fosters, and "other formidable foes who had been expelled from the church," as Mr. Tullidge states it. (See History, page 476.) Concerning these expelled apostates Mr. Tullidge further remarks:

"These sought to establish in Nauvoo an incendiary paper called the Nauvoo Expositor, the avowed purpose of which was to stir up the people of Illinois to bring Joseph Smith 'to justice for his crimes,' and expel the Saints from the State. It was like building the magazine of the enemy in the City of Refuge; and also after the first number of the Expositor the Nauvoo City Council declared the paper a public nuisance and dangerous to the peace of the commonwealth; and they thereupon ordered the office of the paper to be demolished by the marshal and his posse." (Ibid, page 476.)

It is perhaps needless to say that this patriotic city council was composed entirely of Mormons, and that Joseph Smith was at the time himself mayor of the city of Nauvoo. (See Tullidge's History, page 484.) Complaint was made and warrants issued for the arrest of the prophet and others concerned in the destruction of the Expositor office, the writs being returnable at Carthage, the county seat. But Joseph, believing that greater safety was to be found among his brethren, swore out a writ of habeas corpus, and was tried before Daniel H. Wells, a particular friend of the prophet, but a deadly enemy to the Laws, the publishers of the Expositor. Concerning this trial Joseph says:

"At 2 p. m. we all went before Justice Wells at his house, and after a long and close examination we were discharged." (Ibid, page 482.)

That they were under these circumstances acquitted of this serious offense against the law of the State is not a matter of surprise, but certainly it does not speak well for the honor and integrity of the men engaged in the transaction. If they were innocent of the crimes charged by the Expositor, why did not the leaders openly invite a careful investigation of the charges? Why should it be thought necessary, simply because they had the power in their own hands, to suppress the freedom of speech and the liberty of the press in this wanton manner? To the unbiased, reflective mind there is but one answer to this question; they feared the consequences of further exposure by these men who stood so near to the prophet, and who therefore knew whereof they affirmed. These are the most probable reasons why the Expositor office was "demolished" and its press broken to pieces and thrown into the Mississippi river.
The reader will perhaps remember that the Laws and Higbees figured in the certificate concerning Dr. Bennett's "secret wife system," published some two years previously. If they were honest in their statements, they were probably ignorant of the existence of any such system at the time, and upon learning the facts later, became disgusted with the whole affair and left the church. On the other hand, if they were not honest, as Mormons usually declare, then they cannot be believed under any circumstances, and their former testimony is rendered absolutely worthless.

It was at this exact time that Elder William Marks, of the Reorganized Church, declared that he talked with Joseph about polygamy, and that he must try and "speedily put it down," or it would ultimately ruin the church. This fact affords a clue to the probable cause of the apostasy of the Laws, Fosters, Higbees and others, and their consequent denunciation of the prophet through the columns of the Expositor.

That polygamy had been secretly taught by Joseph and Hyrum Smith for months prior to this rupture between these dissenters and the prophet, I shall now undertake to prove beyond the possibility of reasonable doubt.

Ebenezer Robinson and his wife Angeline, it will be remembered, were among the signers of the famous certificate already referred to, which appeared in the Times and Seasons, Oct. 1, 1842, (as quoted by Alexander H. Smith) some two years previous to the time of which we have just spoken. They were both baptized by Joseph Smith before their marriage, and were at a later day joined in marriage by the prophet. Mr. Robinson also became editor of the Times and Seasons, the official organ of the church, and was therefore a man in whom Joseph reposed great confidence.

It may not be amiss to remark in this connection that some time in 1865 the writer, while performing ministerial duties in Decatur County, Iowa, became intimately acquainted with both Mr. Robinson and his wife, who were at the time faithful members of the Reorganized Church. We often talked about the early days of the church, and the closing scenes at Nauvoo. During some of these conversations Mr. Robinson repeatedly assured me that he knew more about those early days than he then wished to disclose, but that he intended at some future time to make a statement of facts as he knew them to exist. My efforts to have him confide his secret to me were unavailing, his only reply being, "You are a young man, and I do not wish to say anything that will tend to shake and possibly destroy your faith." And thus for the time the matter rested. Mr. Robinson was, however, true to his promise, and left the statement he had intended to make. Following are the affidavits of Mr. Robinson and his wife, made several years before their death.

"TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

"We, Ebenezer Robinson and Angeline Robinson, husband and wife, hereby certify that in the fall of 1843 Hyrum Smith, brother of Joseph Smith, came to our house at Nauvoo, Illinois, and taught us the doctrine of polygamy. And I, the said Ebenezer Robinson, hereby further state that he gave me special instructions how I could manage the matter so as not to have it known to the public. He also told us that while he had heretofore opposed the doc-
trine, he was wrong and his brother Joseph was right; referring to his teaching it.

"Ebenezer Robinson.
"Angelina E. Robinson.

"Sworn to and subscribed before me this 29th day of December, 1873.

[L.s.]
"J. M. Sallee, Notary Public."

Mrs. Robinson having died since the execution of the foregoing, and some question arising as to how and wherein the said Hyrum Smith (one of the first officers and leaders of the church) had given special instruction to Mr. Robinson, he was questioned in regard to the matter, whereupon he executed the following:

"To whom it may concern:

"This is to certify that in the latter part of November, or in December, 1843, Hyrum Smith (brother of Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) came to my house in Nauvoo, Illinois, and taught me the doctrine of spiritual wives, or polygamy.

"He said he heard the voice of the Lord give the revelation on spiritual wifery (polygamy) to his brother Joseph, and that while he had heretofore opposed the doctrine, he was wrong, and his brother Joseph was right all the time.

"He told me to make a selection of some young woman and he would send her to me, and take her to my home, and if she should have an heir, to give out word that she had a husband who had gone on a mission to a foreign country. He seemed disappointed when I declined to do so.

"Davis City, Iowa, October 23, 1885.

E. Robinson.

"Subscribed and sworn to before me, a Notary Public in and for Decatur County, Iowa, this 24th day of October, A. D. 1885.

[L.s.]
"Z. H. Gurley, Notary Public."

Copied from the Biographical and Historical Record of Ringgold and Decatur Counties, Iowa, at pages 543 and 544.

This, it seems to me, ought to be conclusive upon this point, and is absolutely unanswerable. Here are the sworn statements of two persons whose veracity has never been called in question, even among members of the Mormon Church, up to the time of making their statements; and I have never learned that their truthfulness and sincerity have been called in question even since the above affidavits were made.

Neither of these persons can justly be charged with any sinister motive in connection with this transaction, as they could gain nothing except possibly the ill will of the people of the Reorganized Church, by whom they were at the time surrounded. In view of the fact that Mr. and Mrs. Robinson were strong personal friends of Joseph and Hyrum Smith at the time the latter tried to lead them into polygamy, and that in spite of all this they lived and died in the faith, renders it highly probably that they state the exact truth concerning the relation which the prophet and patriarch sustained to polygamy.

I shall now present the testimony of many other witnesses upon this subject, which proves that Joseph and Hyrum Smith not only taught polygamy, but that they also practiced what they taught; and that "Joseph the Prophet" was the author of that nefarious document called the law of "celestial marriage."
CHAPTER XXXVI.
BEARDED THE LION IN HIS DEN.

Bearded the lion in his den—Alexander and David Smith in Utah—Deny that their father was in polygamy—Brighamites respond—Smith-Littlefield controversy—Positive proof that Joseph Smith had plural wives—Testimony of David Fulmer—Thomas Grever's letter—Certificate of Lovina Walker—Affidavit of Emily D. P. Young—Affidavit of Leonard Soby—What Z. H. Gurley says of Mr. Soby—Testimony of Mercy R. Thompson—She was sealed to Hyrum Smith—Her letter to President Smith—His view of the case—His accounts for the origin of polygamy—Summary.

At a general conference of the Reorganized Church, held at St. Louis, Mo., April 6-11, 1869, Alexander H. and David H. Smith, sons of "Joseph, the seer," were associated in a mission to Utah. Young and full of zeal, they prosecuted their work with warmth and vigor. Confidently believing that their father was in no way responsible for the introduction of polygamy into the church, they bearded the lion in his den, challenging Brigham and the Utah authorities to produce the evidence they had to offer in support of the claim that Joseph Smith was a polygamist and the author of the revelation on celestial marriage. This called forth a response from the "Brighamites" in the form of numerous affidavits from persons whose opportunities were ample for knowing whereof they affirmed. Among these were women who declared that they had been the wives respectively of the prophet and patriarch at Nauvoo.

The controversy thus raised continued for years, culminating in 1886 in a correspondence between President Joseph Smith, of Lamoine, Iowa, and Elder L. O. Littlefield, of Salt Lake City. The documents produced by Mr. Littlefield were later published in tract form entitled,

"CELESTIAL MARRIAGE."

"POSITIVE PROOF THAT JOSEPH SMITH HAD PLURAL WIVES."

From the above tract the following extracts are taken. These documents, with Mr. Littlefield's remarks thereon, were published in The Utah Journal, Logan, Utah, April 21 and April 21, 1886. In introducing the question, Mr. Littlefield says:

"In the History of Joseph Smith, under date of October 5, 1843, can be found the following:

"Gave instructions to try those persons who were preaching, teaching or practicing the doctrine of plural wives; for according to the law I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time on whom the power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said that no man shall have but one wife at a time unless the Lord direct otherwise."

It may be a matter of interest to the reader to know that the Manuscript History of Joseph Smith (as written by himself) at the time of his death fell into the hands of the leaders, and was taken by them to Salt Lake City; and it is from this record the foregoing extract was taken by Mr. Littlefield. And how perfectly it harmonizes with both the text of the "revelation," and the statement of Elder Marks. No man but Joseph held the "keys of this power," and some were breaking over the rule and taking
other wives without a "revelation" through the
prophet; and because they were so reckless charges
were to be preferred against them."

As to the genuineness of the revelation in question,
the following is in point:

TESTIMONY OF DAVID FULLMER.

"TERRITORY OF UTAH.
COUNTY OF SALT LAKE."

"Be it remembered on this fifteenth day of June,
A. D., 1849, personally appeared before me, James
Jack, a Notary Public in and for said county, David
Fullmer, who was by me sworn in due form of law,
and upon his oath saith, that on or about the twelfth
day of August, A. D., 1843, while in meeting with the
High Council, (he being a member thereof), in
Hyrum Smith’s brick office, in the City of Nauvoo,
County of Hancock, State of Illinois, Dunbar Wilson
made inquiry in relation to the subject of a plurality
of wives, as there were rumors about respecting it,
and he was satisfied there was something in those re-
marks, and he wanted to know what it was, upon
which Hyrum Smith stepped across the road to his
residence, and soon returned, bringing with him a
copy of the revelation on celestial marriage, given to
Joseph Smith, July 12, A. D., 1843, and read the
same to the High Council, and bore testimony of its
truth. The said David Fullmer further said that to
the best of his memory and belief, the following
named persons were present: Wm. Marks, Austin A.
Cowles, Samuel Bent, George W. Harris, Dunbar
Wilson, Wm. Huntington, Levi Jackman, Aaron
Johnson, Thomas Grover, David Fullmer, Phineas
Richards, James Allred and Leonard Soby. And the
said David Fullmer further saith that Wm. Marks,
Austin A. Cowles and Leonard Soby were the only
persons present who did not receive the testimony of
Hyrum Smith, and that all the others did receive it
from the teaching and testimony of the said Hyrum
Smith. And further, that the copy of said Revelation
on Celestial Marriage, published in the Desert
News extra of September fourteenth, A. D., 1852, is a
true copy of the same. DAVID FULLMER."

"Subscribed and sworn to by the said David Full-
mer the day and year first above written.

"JAMES JACK, Notary Public."

EXTRACT FROM THOMAS GROVER’S LETTER.

"The High Council of Nauvoo, was called together
by the Prophet Joseph Smith, to know whether they
would accept the revelation on celestial marriage or
not.

"The presidency of the Stake, Wm. Marks, Father
Coles and the late Apostle Charles C. Rich, were
there present. The following are the names of the
High Council that were present, in their order, viz.:
Samuel Bent, William Huntington, Alpheus Cutler,
Thomas Grover, Lewis D. Wilson, David Fullmer,
Aaron Johnson, Newel Knight, Leonard Soby, Isaac
Allred, Henry G. Sherwood and, I think, Samuel
Smith.

"Brother Hyrum Smith was called upon to read
the revelation. He did so, and after reading it said:
‘Now, you that believe in this revelation and go forth
and obey the same shall be saved, and you that reject
it shall be damned.’

"We saw this prediction verified in less than one
week. Of the Presidency of the Stake, William
Marks and Father Coles rejected the revelation; of the Council that were present, Leonard Soby rejected it. From that time forward there was a very strong division in the High Council. These three men greatly diminished in spirit day after day, so that there was a great difference in the line of their conduct, which was perceivable to every member that kept the faith.

"From that time forward we often received instructions from the Prophet as to what was the will of the Lord and how to proceed."

CERTIFICATE OF LOVINA WALKER.

"I, Lovina Walker, hereby certify that while I was living with Aunt Emma Smith, in Fulton City, Fulton County, Illinois, in the year 1849, she told me that she, Emma Smith, was present, and witnessed the marriage or sealing of Eliza Partridge, Emily Partridge, Maria Lawrence, and Sarah Lawrence to her husband Joseph Smith, and that she gave her consent thereto.

"LOVINA WALKER."

"We hereby witness that Lovina Walker made and signed the above statement on the 16th day of June, A.D. 1869, of her own free will and accord.

"HYRUM WALKER.
"SARAH E. SMITH.
"JOS. F. SMITH."

Joseph F. Smith, who verifies the foregoing certificate, is a son of the Patriarch Hyrum Smith, and cousin of Alexander and David, who were at the time missionaries to Utah.
Owing to the aggressive methods of the missionaries of the Reorganized Church in Utah, and their constant denial that Joseph and Hyrum Smith ever sanctioned, much less authorized, the practice of polygamy, the "authorities" were active in the collection of such proofs as would establish the fact, and place it beyond reasonable doubt. In the mean time a controversy had grown up between President Joseph Smith, editor of the Saints' Herald, Lamoni, Iowa, and Elder L. O. Littlefield, through the Utah Journal, Logan, Utah, concerning which the editor of the Ogden (Utah) Herald, of Jan. 5, 1886, says:

"Our readers will remember that in the correspondence which passed between Elder Littlefield and Joseph Smith, Jr., of the Reorganized Church some time since, Mr. Smith challenged Elder Littlefield to give the names of parties who were present and heard the revelation on celestial marriage read before the High Council at Nauvoo."

Thus challenged, Mr. Littlefield presented the statements of David Fullmer and Thomas Grover, already given, adding thereto the sworn statement of Leonard Soby, a member of the High Council, which I now herewith submit as follows:

**AFFIDAVIT OF LEONARD SOBY**

""Copy.  
STATE OF NEW JERSEY.  
COUNTY OF BURLINGTON.  
ss."

"Be it remembered that on this fourteenth day of November, A. D. 1883, personally appeared before me, J. W. Roberts, a Justice of the Peace, county and State aforesaid, Leonard Soby, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon oath saith, that on or about the 12th day of August, 1843, in the city of Nauvoo, in the State of Illinois, in the county of Hancock, before the High Council of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, of which body and council aforesaid he was a member, personally appeared one Hyrum Smith, of the first presidency of said church, and brother to Joseph Smith, the president and prophet of the same, and presented to said council the Revelation on Polygamy, enjoining its observance and declaring it came from God; unto which a large majority of the council agreed and assented, believing it to be of a celestial order, though no vote was taken upon it, for the reason that the voice of the prophet, in such matters, was understood by us to be the voice of God to the church, and that said revelation was presented to said council, as before stated, as coming from Joseph Smith, the prophet of the Lord, and was received by us as other revelations had been. The said Leonard Soby further saith that Elder Austin A. Cowles, a member of the High Council aforesaid, did, subsequently to the 12th day of August, 1843, openly declare against the said revelation on polygamy, and the doctrines therein contained."

**LEONARD SOBY.**

""Subscribed and sworn to by the said Leonard Soby, the day and year first above written."

""JOSHUA W. ROBERTS.  
""Justice of the Peace."

A very interesting and significant episode connected with this affair, and which is not generally known, is thus presented by the Ogden Herald:

""Among the names given by Elder Littlefield [to President Joseph Smith] was that of Leonard Soby. The prophet of the Reorganized Church knew where
Mr. Soby resided, and instructed a member of his
church in high standing to draw up an affidavit stat-
ing that Mr. Soby was not present at such meeting,
and never heard the revelation read.

"The affidavit was drawn up under the instruction
of Joseph Smith, Jr., and Mr. Gurley, who was some-
thing of a lawyer, called on Mr. Soby at his home in
Beverly, New Jersey, and requested him to sign it.
The affidavit stated that Mr. Soby was present at the
High Council meeting referred to, but did not hear
the revelation read. When Mr. Gurley requested Mr.
Soby to sign the document, Soby objected, saying he
was present at the meeting and heard the revelation,
and could not sign an affidavit to the contrary. This
considerably disconcerted his interlocutor, and Mr.
Soby added: 'If you will draw up an affidavit setting
forth that I was there and did hear the revelation, I
will sign it for you.' But Mr. Gurley did not want
that kind of testimony, and retired rather crestfallen,
but wiser, and has since apostatized from the Reor-
ganized Church." (From the Ogden, Utah, Herald,
Jan. 5, 1886.)

Of Mr. Gurley's visit, Mr. Soby, in a letter to Mr.
Littlefield, dated Jan. 21, 1886, remarks:

"The facts as published in the [Ogden] Herald are
ture, referring to the interview between Mr. Gurley
and myself, and I refer you to him for a copy of my
affidavit. Mr. Gurley is very much of a gentleman,
and if you ask for it in my name he will not refuse." (Celestial Marriage, by Littlefield, page 3.)

Mr. Gurley, a personal friend of the writer, who is
now an influential member of the Iowa General
Assembly from the sixth district, furnished the copy
of Mr. Soby's affidavit presented above, and in a
personal letter speaks of his visit to Mr. Soby as fol-
lows:

"I talked with Mr. Soby carefully, and fully satis-
fied myself that he was honest and sincere. He had
opposed polygamy, but finally concluded that he was
wrong and Joseph right—just as Hyrum Smith de-
clared, as set forth in Robinson's affidavit. Little-
field's statement that I retired crestfallen is off—not
true. It is evidently confounded with another party."

Mr. Soby in his affidavit refers to the fact that
Elder Austin Cowles refused to accept the revelation
on celestial marriage, and at last "openly declared
against the said revelation on polygamy and the do-
ctrines therein contained." The writer is himself a
witness to the truthfulness of this portion of Mr.
Soby's statement. While located in Decatur County,
Iowa, in A. D. 1865, as a minister of the Reorganized
Church, I made the acquaintance of "Father Cowles,"
as he was then called, and often visited at his house.
As he stood aloof from all religious bodies, and know-
ing he was a man of prominence in church matters at
Nauvoo while the prophet lived, we naturally talked
on questions pertaining to the church; and he assured
me that polygamy was the fatal rock upon which
Mormonism was wrecked, and that he knew that
Joseph and Hyrum were both "mixed up in it." But
this I could not believe at the time, and attributed his
declarations to the fact that he had apostatized. But
under the light of more recent development it is per-
fectly apparent that the venerable old man knew what
he was talking about.

With the introduction of one more witness I shall
submit this question to the arbitrament of an enlight-
ened and, as I believe, a just public.
"After reading the correspondence between you and L. O. Littlefield, I concluded it was the duty of some one to bear a testimony which could not be disputed. Finding from your letters to Littlefield that no one of your father's friends had performed this duty while you were here, now I will begin at once and tell you my experience.

"My beloved husband, R. B. Thompson, your father's private secretary to the end of his mortal life, died August 27, 1841. (I presume you will remember him.) Nearly two years after his death your father told me that my husband had appeared to him several times, telling him that he did not wish me to request your uncle Hyrum to have me sealed to him for time. Hyrum communicated this to his wife (my sister), who by request opened the subject to me, when every thing within me rose in opposition to such a step; but when your father called and explained the subject to me I dared not refuse to obey the counsel, lest peradventure I should be found fighting against God, and especially when he told me the last time my husband appeared to him he came with such power that it made him tremble.

"He then inquired of the Lord what he should do; the answer was, 'Go and do as my servant hath required.' He then took all opportunity to communicate this to your uncle Hyrum, who told me that the Holy Spirit rested upon him from the crown of his head to the soles of his feet. The time was appointed, with the consent of all parties, and your father sealed me to your uncle Hyrum for time, in my sister's room, with a covenant to deliver me up in the morning of the resurrection to Robert Blaskell Thompson with whatever offspring should be the..."
result of the union, at the same time counseling your uncle to build a room for me and move me over as soon as convenient, which he did, and I remained there as a wife the same as my sister to the day of his death. All this I am ready to testify to in the presence of God, angels and men.

"Now I assure you I have not been prompted or dictated by any mortal being in writing to you; neither does a living soul know it but my invalid daughter.

"God bless you, is the sincere prayer of your true friend.

Mercy R. Thompson.

"P. S.—If you feel disposed to ask me any questions, I will be pleased to answer concerning blessings which I received under the hands of your late mother, by the direction of your father.—M. R. T. in Deseret News." (Littlefield's Celestial Marriage, pages 1 and 2.)

The testimony of the above named witnesses makes up the case so far as the question of polygamy is concerned, and includes the principal facts upon which the parties to the controversy depend in order to the establishment of their respective contentions, and from them the reader will be able to form conclusions for himself. The correctness of such conclusions will of course depend very largely upon the impartiality with which the evidence is weighed.

As may be expected, President Joseph Smith has not been an idle and disinterested spectator in this unique drama, but has been an active participant in the somewhat spirited contest between the rival churches of the Saints for supremacy. He has taken all the facts into consideration, and it cannot fail to be a matter of interest to the reader to know what disposition President Smith makes of the evidence presented above. While the conclusions are not, perhaps, such as others may form, yet it is but just and proper that they should be given here.

Referring to the visit to his mother and his interview with her upon the perplexing question of polygamy, and his father's relation thereto, President Smith, in his autobiography, thus states his conclusions:

"It will be seen that in view of her departure at so early a time after the statements made by my mother heretofore recorded, those statements may be regarded as her last testimony upon the subjects named. It may be as well, then, that I here state my convictions regarding the vexing question of polygamy.

"I believe that during the last years of my father's life there was a discussion among the elders, and possibly in practice, a theory like the following: that persons who might believe that there was a sufficient degree of spiritual affinity between them as married companions, to warrant the desire to perpetuate that union in the world to come and after the resurrection, could go before some high priest whom they might choose, and there making known their desire, might be married for eternity, pledging themselves while in the flesh unto each other for the observance of the rights of companionship in the spirit; that this was called spiritual marriage, and upon the supposition that what was sealed by this priesthood, before which this pledge was made on earth, was sealed in heaven, the marriage relation then entered into would continue in eternity. That this was not authorized by command of God or rule of the church; but grew out
of the constant discussion had among the elders; and that after a time it resulted in the wish (father to the thought) that married companionship rendered unpleasant here by incompatibilities of different sorts, might be cured for the world to come, by securing through this means a congenial companion in the spirit; that there was but brief hesitancy between the wish and an attempt to put it into form and practice. That once started, the idea grew; spiritual affinities were sought after, and in seeking them the hitherto sacred precincts of home were invaded; less and less restraint was exercised; the lines between virtue and license, hitherto sharply drawn, grew more and more indistinct; spiritual companionship if sanctioned by a holy priesthood, to confer favors and pleasures in the world to come, might be antedated and put to actual test here—and so the enjoyment of a spiritual companionship in eternity became a companionship here; a wife a spiritual wife, if congenial; if not, one that was congenial was sought, and a wife in fact was supplemented by one in spirit, which in easy transition became one in essential earthly relationship. From this, if one, why not two or more, and plural marriage, or plurality of wives, was the growth. That so soon as the prophet discovered that this must inevitably be the result of the marriage for eternity between married companions, which for the time was perhaps looked upon as a harmless enlargement of the priesthood theory, and rather intended to glorify them in doing business for eternity and the heavens, he set about to correct it. But the evil had, unnoted by him, taken root, and it was too late. What had been possibly innocently spiritual became fleshly, sensual—devilish. He was taken away. The long train

of circumstances burst upon the people. He and Hyrum placed themselves in the front of the impending storm and went down to death. That which in life they were powerless to prevent rapidly took the successive forms heretofore stated, and polygamy, after eight years of further fostering in secret, rose in terrible malignity to essay the destruction of the church. That my father may have been a party to the first step in this strange development, I am perhaps prepared to admit, though the evidence connecting him with it is vague and uncertain; but that he was in any otherwise responsible for plural marriage, plurality of wives, or polygamy, I do not know, nor are the evidences so far produced to me conclusive to force my belief.” (Tullidge’s History, pages 798, 799 and 800.)

In justice to President Smith I wish to state in this connection, that at the time the above was written (1880) all the facts developed in the Littlefield-Smith correspondence (1886) were perhaps not in his possession; but as eleven years have since elapsed, and these opinions have never been revised, it is quite fair to presume that they reflect the present views and convictions of the Prophet of the Reorganized Church, and as such they are here submitted.

In all Mormon literature I have never met with a statement by any writer where the probable manner in which polygamy was conceived, and the processes of its development are presented with greater clearness and force than is the above from the pen of President Smith. His view as to the manner in which the system was evolved is in perfect harmony with the facts as they are given in the preceding chapters relative to this subject; but the manner in which the
system originated is of far less importance to Mormonism than is the question relating to the authority upon which it is based.

The conclusions reached by the writer are widely different from those stated by Mr. Smith in the closing paragraph of the statement above quoted. He seems to think the evidence quite insufficient to force the conviction that his father was in any manner "responsible for plural marriage, plurality of wives, or polygamy," while the writer's mind has literally been "forced" by the overwhelming character of the evidence presented upon this point.

**SUMMARY.**

The facts as we glean them from the circumstances of the case, and the testimony of credible witnesses, may be stated substantially as follows:

1. The conduct of the Mormon leaders at a time prior to August, 1835, had been such as to give rise to the charge of "fornication and polygamy."

2. That this belief on the part of those not connected with the church, instead of diminishing, was only intensified with the developments of the passing years.

3. That a "secret wife system" was gradually developed among the leaders, which came to light through the disclosures of General John C. Bennett in 1842.

4. These revelations were followed by others of a more startling character early in 1844, in strong charges of crime made by William Law, of the "First Presidency," and Major-General Wilson Law, of the Nauvoo Legion, through the columns of the *Expositor.*

5. That from 1842 to 1844 polygamy had been preached in various States by the elders of the church, thus showing it to be general.

6. Efforts were made by Joseph and Hyrum Smith to suppress the facts by making public denials—through the press—that such things were taught or practiced by the leaders, thus seeking to evade the charge that a "secret wife system," or polygamy, existed in Nauvoo.

7. That in order to seemingly support this view, and enforce it upon the public mind, several of these elders were "cut off," or threatened with expulsion, for teaching "polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines."

8. That at the very time these notices and denials were published in the *Times and Seasons,* by the authority of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, they were both not only teaching the doctrine, but were actually practicing polygamy—Joseph having *five* and Hyrum *two* wives, as now appears by the testimony of the women themselves.

9. That the revelation on celestial marriage was presented to the members of the High Council, convened for that purpose by Joseph Smith, and was read by Hyrum Smith, in their presence, Aug. 12, 1844.

10. A copy of this document was preserved by Brigham Young, who had it publicly read by Orson Pratt in the Tabernacle at Salt Lake City, August, 1852, and was published in *The Deseret News* in September of the same year.

These are the facts as they appear from the records, and as they are proved by the great preponderance of the evidence in the case. What importance attaches
to these facts? and how will they affect the Mormon Church? are questions worthy the consideration of the thoughtful student of the times.

Of one thing we may be quite sure, and that is, if Joseph Smith was the author of that "revelation" enjoining polygamy, it at once brands him as a wicked and unscrupulous impostor, and wholly unworthy of the respect and esteem of decent people. If he is the author of such an abominable document, how can any sane man repose the slightest confidence in any of his so-called revelations?

If the matters and things set forth in the testimony of these witnesses shall be esteemed as true, then it must in all candor be admitted that Joseph was an unblushing impostor, and as a consequence, Mormonism is a deception and a fraud. And if this be true, O, then, "what shall the harvest be?"

With the consciousness of having endeavored to fairly and honestly present the facts as I have been able to gather them, the question is submitted to the reader, and we leave it with him to decide as to whether Joseph Smith was or was not the author of Mormon polygamy.

CHAPTER XXXVII.

THE GATHERING.

The gathering—A new Jerusalem promised—Western Missouri the land of Zion—Independence the central spot—Temple to be built—Saints begin to gather—Established in Zion—A dark cloud arises—Driven from Jackson County—Zion in possession of the enemy—The redemption of Zion—How it is to be accomplished—A parable—Zion's camp—Baalak Ake—The Lord's warriors—Start for Zion—Meet a superior force—A narrow escape—A terrible storm—A new revelation—Army to disband—Wait for a little season—Cholera in the camp—Tribe as Abraham—I will fight your battles—Shall find grace and favor in the eyes of the people—Let my army become very strong—Far West—The Mormon war—Resist the militia—Several killed—Exterminate order of Gov. Boggs—Joseph and the leaders arrested—Mormons driven from the State—The whole gathering scheme a failure.

The fact that God had promised to gather the tribes of scattered Israel and restore them to their own lands seems to have been the germ from which sprang the gathering mania, so prevalent among the Saints of every class and name. The idea of gathering did not of course originate with the common people, but like every other doctrine and dogma of Mormonism, it had its origin in the brain of Joseph Smith. The earlier views of the prophet on this question were rather dim and shadowy; the first specific reference to the subject being in September, 1830, as follows:

"And ye [six elders] are called to bring to pass the gathering of mine elect [mentioned in par. 1], for mine elect hear my voice, and harden not their