

MORMONS AT KIRTLAND

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Though one may disbelieve in the divinity of its origin, one could hardly quarrel with the great principles which the Saints acknowledged during the early period as underlying the Mormon's doctrine. Smith, two years after leaving Kirtland, answered a man who had asked in public meeting, "What constitutes a Mormon?" in these words: "It is to believe that Christ is the Son of God, also a firm belief in the scriptures, then faith, repentance, and baptism for the remission of sins; the laying on of hands for the reception of the Holy Ghost, having a church organized according to the new testament pattern, and to live by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God!"²⁶⁹ It is not their great underlying principles which one rejects but the Mormon's interpretation and expansion

269. Times and Seasons, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 9-11

of them; and these interpretations and expansions the Saints were not shouting from the house-tops in the year 1840.

It has been charged against the Mormons that they practiced polygamy at Kirtland. "At a secret night meeting, in a schoolhouse whose location is yet pointed out, Smith laid his new revelation concerning spiritual wives before a select few of his followers for their judgment as to its promulgation."²⁷⁰ Joseph F. Smith, the head of the Mormon Church in the

270. a. Bibliotheca Sacra, Jan. 1903, p. 174. Article by Bosworth.
 b. Gibbs, J. F.: Lights and Shadows of Mormonism, pp. 98-102.

west and nephew of the prophet, declares that the original revelation on polygamy was given to his inspired uncle about the year 1831. After that date Smith often remarked that the brethren would take his life if he dared to tell them the new truths which God was making plain to him.²⁷¹ In

271. Cannon, F. J., and Knapp, George L.: Brigham Young and His Mormon Empire, pp. 546-55.