

THE NEXT STEP IS ESSENTIAL

The plan of salvation can be likened to a route of a specific Journey. For an example: it might stretch from the west coast to the east coast passing through the many states, cities, hamlets, valleys, deserts, farm lands, mountains, etc. Along the way the traveller would come in contact with many different kinds of situations, people, environments, climates, and conditions.

Certainly it would not be practical to imagine that every traveller begin his journey at the exact spot that he did the day before. Why? Because many advancing along the path may already be much farther along. They may be hundreds of miles from the uttermost point of beginning.

The one thing that is important to understand is the fact that everyone must continue his journey from where he is. It is not necessary to back track to the beginning (say Los Angeles) if he has progressed to any given point along the way (like Salt Lake City). The traveller continues from where he is along the route, step by step.

In the plan of salvation (as in the simulated trip) that uttermost point of beginning is faith. No journey can begin without the traveller possessing the 'Faith' and 'belief' that the route to be followed will eventually lead the person to his destination. So 'Faith' is the first and most important ingredient to begin any journey, regardless of the station he finds himself ... such as today, as each day, is another journey which is a very important segment of the over all venture.

It would be of little value for a person to worry about the problems to be encountered during the last few miles if he were struggling to over come the problems of the first few miles. He would not even know if there would be problems and if there were he'd have no way of knowing what they would be.

All that is essential for anyone to know is: "That which will lead him to the next step" along his journey.

Do you possess "Faith?" If you do you are ready to continue to the next step. In the plan of salvation it is understood

that the terms ‘steps,’ ‘ordinances,’ and ‘principles’ are synonymous. Hence we know that the “First (steps) principles and ordinances of the Gospel (the plan of salvation) are: 1. Faith, 2. Repentance, 3. Baptism, 4. Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.” But what comes next? Will these 4 principles alone assure a person of his exaltation? Is all that is required of now is to live a good life and learn all we can without ‘doing’ anything else (just believing) without receiving any additional ordinances?

Only a fool would believe so. As that would no more assure a person of his exaltation than taking the first four steps on the journey from west to east and expecting to reach the destination at their conclusion. Every step is necessary. The traveller cannot leave out the last half and make it. He cannot bypass the middle portion and still reach his destination.

The Prophet Joseph Smith was approached on many different occasions by good people who felt the ordinances that God had revealed for the exaltation of man were non-essential . . . that a person could attain 'Godhood' by believing in principles only and not having to give up the worldly false traditions and abide by the laws there-to appertaining. Be it well understood that rationalising away, offering excuses, justifying failure to live these laws as God commands can never be reason enough to reverse the requirements Joseph Smith explained it by asserting that “All (not just a few, but all) ordinances are necessary.”

“The question is frequently asked, ‘can we not be saved without going through with ALL those ordinances?’ I would answer, NO, not the fullness of salvation . . . any person who is exalted to the highest mansion has to abide a celestial law, and the whole law too.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pg. 331*)

The words of President Joseph Fielding Smith reiterates these same requirements for mankind during this lifetime, that . . . “To enter the celestial and obtain exaltation it is necessary that the whole law be kept.” . . . there are certain definite covenants we must keep in faithfulness, living by “every word that proceedeth forth from the mouth of God.” The following page he states:

“Do you desire to enter into the celestial kingdom and receive eternal life? Then be willing to keep all of the commandments the Lord may give to you. Baptism and confirmation are the ordinances by which we come into the kingdom of God. But these ordinances of themselves will not grant us a place of exaltation. The man who is baptised and confirmed, who pays his tithing, keeps the Word of Wisdom and attends to the ordinary duties required of members of the Church, is entitled to enter that kingdom. Yet he may be merely a servant there. If that is all he is willing to do, he cannot be exalted. He will not become an heir and receive the fullness of that kingdom. Other ordinances and obligations will be required of him if he obtains exaltation and becomes in every sense of the word an heir, possessing “all that the Father hath.” (*The Way To Perfection* pg. 207)

Is it possible to wait until the next life to live God’s requirement? No, not the commandments God gives us in this life as they are meant for this life and are essential.

“For behold, this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God; yea, behold the day of this life is the day for men to perform their labours.

If ye have procrastinated the day of your repentance even until death, behold, ye have become subjected to the spirit of the devil, and he doth seal you his.” (*Alma 34: 32, 35*)

The restoration of the ‘pure’ Gospel of Jesus Christ was no easy task. Joseph Smith seemed to be tireless in his efforts to teach people the requirements of God. Some would accept and then, finding the task more difficult than just drifting along with the whims of a wicked world, would fall by the wayside. Even the Saints were slow to understand and many unwilling to learn the higher, but essential ways and laws of God. Really, no different from people today ... being so duped in tradition and false opinions

that they are unable to accept the requirements that God (*through His holy prophets - Amos 3:7*) has declared as necessary and essential to salvation. Joseph Smith pleaded:

“I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions; they cannot stand the fire at all. How many will be able to abide a celestial law, and go through and receive their exaltation, I am unable to say, as many are called, but few are chosen.”
(*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 331*)

Again Joseph Smith stressed the importance of living (not just belief in) all of the laws and emphasised that the laws of God must be obeyed:

“I ... spoke to the people, showing them that to get salvation we must not only do some things, but everything which God commanded. Men may preach and practice everything except those things which God commands us to do, and will be damned at last. We may tithe mint and rue, and all manner of herbs, and still not obey the commandments of God. The object with me is to obey and teach others to obey God in just what He tells us to do. It mattereth not whether the principle is popular or unpopular, I will always maintain a true principle, even if I stand alone in it.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 332*)

And he did stand alone in many unpopular principles. Some accused him of being a fallen prophet. Others conspired to take his life on several occasions and finally succeeded. Joseph Smith lived a heart-broken (unpopular) life and died a martyr in upholding the commandments of God. Men have tried to change these commandments ever since; belittle their importance and “sink them out of existence.” Who do you suppose would stand behind such trickery? Satan, of course. In all humility Joseph Smith

declared the same admonition that Paul gave to the Saints in Galatia when they attempted to explain away the pure Gospel. Said Joseph Smith:

“If any man preach any other Gospel than that which I have preached, let him be cursed.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 366)

Paul stated it this way:

“there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ, but though we or an angel from heaven preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.” (*Galatians 1:7–8*)

Everyone, who has heard these quotations, agrees with them and finds no fault. But, how many have taken the time to really gain a first hand knowledge (and testimony) of the commandments of God and the Gospel that is being taught today? And of these, how many are willing to pay the price required by living these commandments without excuses?

“The principle of knowledge is the principle of salvation. This principle can be comprehended by the faithful and diligent; and everyone that does not obtain knowledge sufficient to be saved will be condemned.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 297)

Knowledge is another step along the way, but will knowledge alone exalt a person? certainly not: Satan possesses more knowledge of God the rather and his ways than mankind will ever attain in this mortal existence but he will not receive salvation. Why? Because after a person gains knowledge, he must obey that principle as God commands. The principles of the Gospel never change: The Prophet Joseph Smith again stated:

“Ordinances instituted in the heavens before the foundation of the world, in the priesthood, for the salvation of men, are

not to be altered or changed. All must be saved on the same principles. If a man gets a fullness of the Priesthood of God he has to get it in the same way that Jesus Christ obtained it, and that was by keeping all the commandments and obeying all the ordinances of the house of the Lord ...” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 308*)

Have you ever attempted to help someone, only to have your efforts backfire? This is the very thing that happened to Jesus Christ, The apostles of old and Joseph Smith.

“Many men will say, ‘I will never forsake you, but will stand by you at all times.’ But the moment you teach them some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God that are retained in the heavens and are to be revealed to the children of men when they are prepared for them they will be the first to stone you and put you to death.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 309*)

Have you ever wondered why this is so? Could it not be that they become so vulnerable to criticism that Satan puts forth all effort to destroy a person before he can partake of the ordinances and keep the required commandments of God? Could some be so engrossed in the corrupt theories of the world that their worldly wisdom prevents them from learning the truth?

“There are a great many wise men and women too in our midst who are too wise to be taught; therefore they must die in their ignorance, and in the resurrection they will find their mistake ... All men who become heirs of God and joint heirs with Jesus Christ will have to receive the fullness of the ordinances of his kingdom; and those who will not receive all the ordinances will come short of the fullness of that glory, if they do not lose the whole.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 309*)

Oh, but you say, “there are commandments which cannot be lived today because the world would condemn us. Some are

against the laws of men and by living them would bring rejection from narrow minded people. Our traditions make us reject such commandments and therefore it wouldn't be right to follow God in these matters.” And with a little effort we could easily justify our disobedience and “God certainly wouldn't condemn us for that. God wouldn't deprive us of the full blessings just because we are cowards or because we don't find it convenient to obey His laws. And certainly God wouldn't want the Saints to live a law that Satan projected among men as unlawful, wrong, difficult, against tradition, and misunderstood among men. God wouldn't do such a thing as we have to follow the wishes of evil men and not go against the desires of Satan. Let's try to keep the peace with the enemies of God.”

“Everything that God gives us is lawful and right and it is proper that we should enjoy his gifts and blessings whenever and wherever He is disposed to bestow ... in obedience there is joy ... He never will institute an ordinance or give a commandment to His people that is not calculated in its nature to promote that happiness which He has designed and which will not end in the greatest amount of good and glory to those who become the recipients of his law and ordinances ...” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 256–7*)

But, but what about that terrible principle of Plural Marriage that the Church no longer accepts or teaches as one of God's essential commandments?

“No good thing will I withhold from them who walk uprightly before me, and do my will in all things - I delight in those who seek diligently to know my precepts, and abide the law of my kingdom ...” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, 257*)

“The sacrifice required of Abraham in the offering up of Isaac, shows that if a man would attain to the keys of the kingdom of an endless life; he must sacrifice ‘all’ things.

When God offers a blessing or knowledge to a man, and he refuses to receive it, he will be damned.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 322)

“For if you will that I give unto you a place in the celestial world, you must prepare yourselves by doing the things which I have commanded you and require of you.” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 78:7)

“In the celestial glory there are three heavens or degrees; And in order to obtain the highest, a man must enter into this order of the Priesthood (meaning the new and everlasting covenant of marriage) And if he does not he cannot obtain it. He may enter into the other but that is the end of his kingdom; he cannot have an increase.” (*Doctrine & Covenants* 131:1–4)

Is the “order of the Priesthood” different from the law of the Church? It certainly is: The law of the Church regarding marriage has always been Monogamy. From the time the Priesthood was restored and later the Church established there existed two separate laws pertaining to marriage. The church accepted as its doctrine monogamy, while the priesthood being subject to the commandments of God followed the Law of Abraham (polygamy).^a

The Prophet Joseph Smith was sealed in marriage and lived with several women, as his wives, while he lived, without the consent of the Church. Likewise Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Hyrum Smith, and other men under the direction of the Priesthood lived polygamy while the Church taught and expounded Monogamy ... and without the consent of the Church. The Priesthood is not subject to the Church, then or now.

This priesthood doctrine was never accepted by the Church as doctrine, but in 1852, Brigham Young invited the Church membership to participate in its practice. The “Order of the Priesthood” was taught with great plainness and directness that it

a *Doctrine & Covenants* 132:28,58,61 & 64.

was a must. It must be obeyed and lived in order for a person to inherit the highest degree of the celestial kingdom. That law has never been taken away from the Priesthood and God has stated that He would never again rescind or abrogate His commandment in this regard.

For forty years this law of the priesthood was taught as an essential to salvation and yet less than 3% of the Church membership ever embraced it. Satan went to work in full force on members and non-members establishing unconstitutional laws of evil design to punish, not just the faithful 3% following Gods commandments, but 100% of those professing membership in His Church.

Church property was confiscated, heavy and unjust fines were imposed, its leaders imprisoned, prohibiting the right to vote and hold public office was instilled upon the membership, civil rights were denied all members of the Church, private property and homes were burned, wives and mothers were raped and assaulted without recourse from the law, unbearable conditions prevailed upon 100% of the members of the Church. Finally God permitted the Church to officially reject this law (to protect the Church) as it was not right for 97% (who did not accept it anyhow) of His children to suffer for what 3% was accused of.^a

To save the existence of the Church, God allowed President Wilford Woodruff to issue the Manifesto and call for a vote from the Church membership (at least from those who were not in hiding for living Plural Marriage) wherein it sustained the position presented, to no longer encourage plural marriage publicly in the 'Church.' It should be understood that the Church does not have to be bound by any law or commandment of God if it so chooses not to be. The Church operates on the principle of 'Common Consent' which means its member are only bound by that which they in 'Common' desire to be bound by. This 'Law' of the Priesthood

a "The reason the Manifesto was given and the principle laid aside was that many of those who entered into that principle were not keeping the commandments, and that not over two percent of the Latter-day Saints ever entered into that principle, and the Lord permitted the U.S. Government to pass the Edmund's Tucker law, a law restricting its practice." (Joseph F. Smith, Session of the Salt Lake Temple dedication, John Mills Whitaker Journal, April 1893)

(Plural Marriage) was not one the Church members wanted to accept or be bound by, hence the rejection.

Did that vote cancel the commandment of God? Only for Church members who chose not to be bound by it. How about the Priesthood? Sorry, the vote from the Church does not effect the Priesthood. Remember the Priesthood is not subordinate to the Church nor its self imposed rules, it is as independent now as during the time Joseph Smith lived and stood at the head of the Priesthood. It is not mandatory that the President of the Church also be the President of the Priesthood. On several occasions Joseph Smith tried to be released from standing at the head of the Church as he felt his greater calling was in the Priesthood, but the membership of the Church, by common consent would not sustain his request. (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 318*)

The Priesthood does not have the right of common consent. It is duty bound to keep and obey all commandments of God. This does not mean that a priesthood holder is forced to do anything, as everyone has his free agency to do what he will, but, by accepting the Priesthood he covenants to keep the commandments and if he chooses not to later, he has lost his right to those priesthood promises and blessings.

How can it be lived if the Church no longer teaches or allows the practice of this law? God is not stupid, He knew what was to happen and He prepared for it. Through President John Taylor special men were called outside of the General Authorities of the Church (as representatives of the Church are bound to the voted wishes of Church members) wherein these specially called men were ordained with the keys of the Apostleship to carry on this work if the Church leadership should ever choose to withhold these blessings from worthy priesthood holders.^a

Following the Manifesto (1890) the practice and teaching of Celestial (Plural) Marriage again went underground, yet still under the leadership of the Church Authorities ... acting in their rightful positions in priesthood leadership. Hundreds of priesthood members were called to, and entered into and lived plural marriage until the 1920's^b when President Heber J. Grant bowed to the

a See Lorin C. Woolley and Daniel R. Bateman affidavits.

b For evidence of this see Prof. B. Carmon Hardy, Solemn Covenant.

pressures of the majority of the Church members government officials and non-members. Herein he failed to act in this Priesthood capacity. He felt it more important that the Mormon people should find favour with their enemies (the world).^a From that time on, exposed polygamous families were persecuted and excommunicated in abusive ways. The Church and its leaders fought fervently against the principle, more strongly than previous leaders had advocated its essential aspects. All this without a revelation to that effect and notwithstanding the fact that President Heber J. Grant once had plural wives at the time along with most of the other Church authorities.

Because of this new restrictive position toward those attempting to live God's higher law, it became necessary for the remaining men who were previously called to this position by John Taylor to go underground in keeping the law of Celestial Marriage alive among worthy priesthood members. Within a few short years the persecuted Church reversed its policies and became the persecutor. Those few worthy people trying to follow God's Commandments became ostracised from their friends, disallowed to participate in Church functions, excommunicated from church membership, refused the sacrament, and their children not allowed to attend the Church colleges or serve on missions unless they disowned their parents (this policy still exists today) and anyone suspected of believing in Celestial (Plural) Marriage was ordered to sign a test oath denying the belief in such a principle and affirming that the present Church authorities' policies supersede that revelation from God.

Yet, never has a revelation from God been received to suspend or nullify the practice of plural marriage on the earth. True, the Church membership voted to not be bound by it and the Church leaders have upheld the 'Common Consent' vote of these members. Ninety-seven percent never accepted the commandment anyhow, and certainly should not have to suffer with the 3% who did.

a "My greatest happiness I find in the goodwill and friendship that has developed among all classes of people at home and abroad toward the LDS church during my lifetime." (Heber J. Grant, Salt Lake Tribune, 22 November 1938. See James 4:4)

But, isn't it ironical that those supporting the 97% now expect to receive all the glory, all the blessings, all the advantages that were promised to the faithful 3%? It is erroneously taught today that just plain 'Temple Marriage' with one wife, will assure a person every blessing that was promised to those living the higher law. President Joseph F. Smith clarified the question with this:

“Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was sort of superfluity, or non-essential to salvation or exaltation of mankind. In other words, some of the Saints have said, and believe that a man with one wife sealed to him by the authority of the priesthood for time and eternity, will receive an exaltation as great and glorious, if he is faithful, as he possibly could with more than one. I want here to enter my solemn protest against this idea, for I know it is false ... The marriage of one woman to a man for time and eternity by the sealing power, according to the law of God is a fulfilment of the celestial law of marriage in part. But this is only the beginning of the law, not the whole of it. Therefore, whoever has imagined that he could obtain the fulness of the blessings pertaining to this celestial law, by complying with only a portion of its conditions, has deceived himself. He cannot do it. It is useless to tell me that there is no blessing attached to obedience to the law (plural marriage) or that a man with only one wife can obtain as great a reward, glory or kingdom as he can with more than one, being equally faithful. Patriarchal Marriage involves conditions, responsibilities and obligations ... Man cannot receive the fullness of the blessings unless he fulfils the law, any more than he can claim the gift of the Holy Ghost after he is baptised without the laying on of hands by the proper authority, or the remission of sins without baptism. I understand the law of Celestial Marriage to mean that every man in this Church, who has the ability to obey and practice it in righteousness, and will not, shall be damned. I say I understand it to mean this and nothing less, and I testify in the name of Jesus that it does mean that.”

(Journal of Discourses 20: 23–31)

Many hide behind the excuse that through the Manifesto, God suspended the law [for everyone]. If this be true (which it is not) then why were members of the Church (who were worthy) called to live plural marriage by those in authority (within the Church) for nearly 30 years after it was issued? See the Salt Lake Tribune, October 10, 1910, where a list of 200 men is found who entered plural marriage after the Manifesto was issued. In June 1896 (six years after the Manifesto) President Joseph F. Smith performed a plural marriage between Abraham H. Cannon, and Lillian Hamlin (to mention one)

In the “Smoot Hearing,” Examination of President Joseph F. Smith, Jan. - Mar. 1904, the following is an excerpt of President Smith's statements

“it is contrary to the rule of the Church, and contrary as well to the law of the land for a man to co-habit with his wives ... I have cohabited with my wives - not openly, that is, not in a manner that I thought would be offensive to my neighbours - but I have acknowledged them; I have visited them. They have borne me children since 1890, and I have done it, knowing the responsibility and knowing that I was amenable to the law. I have not claimed that in that case I have obeyed the law of the land ... I do not claim so, and I have said before that I prefer to stand my chances against the law.”

These men lived in defiance of the law of man and the law of the Church but were not excommunicated or deprived of their callings to leadership within the Church. Why then, do you suppose that the Policy of the Church was changed? Why must those living the principle today, suffer such extreme penalties and receive excommunication? Because Celestial Marriage is not to be lived universally (*Neither is the United Order to be lived on a universal basis - Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, page 144, but rather very discretely.*) First one must have the desire to serve God, then he must seek His will and later be called by God to enter

these holy ordinances. One must only recall the history, during the time polygamy was open to all in the Church. This sacred principle was grossly abused by both member and non-member alike.

The policy of the Church today is a result of these abuses, which is justified. Nothing could be more sinful than a sinful world flagrantly exposing God's holy laws. God's chosen few must realise the more glorious principles must be kept from the wicked and fallen won

Much like President Joseph F. Smith, when he said that he was living in defiance of both the laws of the land and the Church ... “Not openly, that is, not in a manner that I thought would be offensive to my neighbours ... (in this way) I prefer to stand my chances against the law.” By having this ordinance an open and active principle of the Church would lead to its flagrant abuse again. Hence, the Church must avoid publicity that would bring both harm to it and the holy ordinances of God. Let's hope and pray the following prophecies do not apply to the present day Church leaders and their policies:

“You might as well deny ‘Mormonism’ and turn away from it, as to oppose the plurality of wives. Let the Presidency of this Church, and the Twelve Apostles, and all the authorities united and say with one voice that they will oppose this doctrine and the whole of them would be damned. What are you opposing it for? It is a principle that God has revealed for the salvation of the human family.”
(Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses 5:203)

“I want to prophesy that all men and women who oppose the revelation which God has given in relation to Polygamy will find themselves in darkness, the spirit of God will withdrawn from them the very moment of their opposition to that principle, until they will finally go down to hell and be damned, if they do not repent.” *(Orson Pratt, Journal of Discourses 17:224)*

“Now if any of you will deny the plurality of wives and continue to do so, I promise that you will be damned; and I

will go still further and say, take this revelation or any other revelation that the Lord has given, and deny it in your feelings, and I promise that you will be damned.” (*Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 3:266*)

This is the last dispensation which means that the commandments of God are to be dispensed for the “last time” to us. It would be hypocritical to assume that God would reveal a doctrine and law for the last time and then have him rescind it in hopes of having him reveal it again. This would make this, the next-to-the-last or maybe the next-to-the-next-to-the-last dispensation, but certainly not the last as God claims.

“Elias appeared and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed ... the keys of this dispensation are committed into your hands; and by this ye may know that the great and dreadful day of the Lord is near, even at the doors.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 110:12, 16*)

If “the great and dreadful day of the Lord (the Millennium) is near.” there isn't time for another dispensation. If “all generations after us” shall be blessed, it appears quite permanent that the revealed (restored) Gospel will not be repealed after less than one generation has passed during which a few years of difficulty had been encountered, nor any part of it.

What do you suppose the “gospel of Abraham” is? Do you believe the law of Abraham would be entailed in that gospel? Certainly it would, and as Apostle Melvin J. Ballard stated it, Aug. 14, 1934 in a personal letter to Elder Eslie Jenson:

“The law of Abraham ... of course was the law of Plural Marriage.”

Likewise the Lord teaches that:

“Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by

revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord. This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself. Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved, But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham, God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because it was the law.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 132:29,31-34*)

The keys of the last dispensation have been given. Many doctrines pertaining to this dispensation have been revealed (for the last time) and we expect many others . . . but none that would conflict with other eternal principles already received.

“The reason why the Church and Kingdom of God cannot advance without the Patriarchal Order of Marriage is that it belongs to this dispensation, just as baptism for the dead does, or any law or ordinance that belongs to a dispensation. Without it the Church cannot progress. The leading men of Israel who are presiding over stakes will have to obey the law of Abraham or they will have to resign.” (*Life of Wilford Woodruff, page 542*)

“for it is not meet that men who will not abide my Law shall preside over my Priesthood.” (*Life of John Taylor, p. 349*)

“The principle of plurality of wives never will be done away –“ (*Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses 3:125*)

God did not say that a man had to live “Plural Marriage” in order to preside over His Church . . . just His Priesthood. But consider the position of the Church today . . . What then could have happened? Did God misjudge? Did God err? Did He lie? Did He play a joke on Joseph Smith and the other faithful leaders? Did

He get his dispensations or time schedule confused and reveal this doctrine too soon? Did He intend that we should embrace the law only until Satan stirred up enough resentment that he could ‘force’ us to reject God's law and substitute it with his evil designs? The world today embraces Satan's ways and doesn't think twice about it: Monogamy, whoredoms, adultery, prostitution, divorce, lack of family responsibility, no marriage vows, and many other degenerative practices. Even many members of the Church today look upon these (all or part) as acceptable as no great sin. But, if these same members hear of someone living a higher law of God (Celestial Plural Marriage) with all of its responsibilities, obligations, honour and moral parenthood they are the first to point the finger of condemnation and accuse that person of a grave sin. Where is their reasoning? Who has them by the hand, God or Satan?

“Many of this people have broken their covenants ... by finding fault with the plurality of wives and trying to sink it out of existence. But you cannot do that, for God will cut you off and raise up another people that will carry out his purposes in righteousness, unless you walk up to the line in your duty.” (*Heber C Kimball, Journal of Discourses 4: 108*)

What then is our responsibility? Do we make an excuse that our family and neighbours won't let us keep God's commandments and then feel assured that we'll receive every blessing possible? Are we to pass the blame onto those who are “trying to sink the principle,” and therein shirk our own duty? Are we “too wise to be taught?” Is it right that we quickly turn our heads and say that we'll live it in heaven but here on earth we'll betray God and His Laws?

“See to it, that you do not betray heaven; that you do not betray Jesus Christ; that you do not betray the brethren; that you do not betray the revelations of God, whether in Bible, Book of Mormon, or Doctrine and Covenants or any other that ever was or ever will be given and revealed unto man in this world or that which is to come.” (*Teachings of the*

Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 156)

Does all this mean that a person should drop everything and run out and enter into polygamy? Absolutely not! God does not expect anyone to enter into this sacred principle without a personal testimony of its truthfulness and then following the prescribed pattern of asking someone possessing the authority to promulgate this holy ordinance. Someone with authority does exist and that too will come as your testimony grows. The records, the scriptures, the revelations of God, the Gospel, etc., can convince you, but it cannot convert you. This you must acquire through fasting, prayer, study, and reasoning. Remember, “seek and you shall find.”

“Search the scriptures - search the revelations which we publish, and ask your Heavenly Father, in the name of His Son Jesus Christ, to manifest the truth an-to you, and if you do it with an eye single to His glory nothing doubting, He will answer you by the power of His Holy Spirit. You will then know for yourselves and not for another. You will not then be dependent on man for the knowledge of God nor will there be any room for speculation. No; for when men receive their instruction from Him that made them, they know how He will save them. Then again we say; Search the Scriptures, search the Prophets and learn what portion of them belongs to you ... you stand then in these last days, as all have stood before you, agents unto yourselves, to be judged according to your works.” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 11–12*)

“To meet the difficulties that are coming, it will be necessary for you to have a knowledge of the truth of this work for yourselves. The difficulties will be of such a character that the man or woman who does not possess this personal knowledge or witness will fall. If you have not got the testimony, live right and call upon the Lord and cease not till you obtain it. If you do not you will not stand. Remember these sayings for many of you will live to see them fulfilled. The time will come when no man or woman

will be able to endure on borrowed light. Each will have to be guided by the light within himself.” (*Life of Heber C. Kimball*, p. 460, 461 1st ed. (p. 450 2nd ed.)

Many are called by few are chosen. Celestial Marriage is not for everyone (too many would only abuse its sacredness). Neither is the United Order. Neither are many other revealed doctrines. True, each principle is open to all, but only a few chosen children of God will be able to comprehend and muster sufficient faith to partake. It may be you and again it may not.

“Some people say I am a fallen Prophet, because I do not bring forth more of the word of the Lord. Why do I not do it? Are we able to receive it? No ...” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 194)

“The reason we do not have secrets of the Lord revealed unto us, is because we do not keep them but reveal them; we do not keep our own secrets, but reveal our difficulties to the world, even to our enemies, then how would we keep the secrets of the Lord. ... ?” (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, p. 194)

How are we to really know what God wants us to do? First, we must answer to ourselves, Do we really want to do what God commands us to do? Or would we rather be satisfied in following the ways of the world ... the arm of flesh? You can justify anything if you try hard enough and maybe Satan’s ways of the world are much more appealing -

“You often hear people desiring more of the knowledge of God, more of the wisdom of God, more of the power of God. They want more revelation, to know more about the Kingdom of Heaven, in heaven and on the earth, and they wish to learn and increase. There is one principle that I wish the people would understand and lay to heart. Just as fast as you will prove before God that you are worthy to receive the mysteries, if you please to call them so, of the

kingdom of heaven - that you are full of confidence in God - that you will never betray a thing that God tells you - that you will never reveal to your neighbour that which you ought not to reveal, as quick as you prepare to be entrusted with the things of God, there is an eternity of them to bestow upon you. Instead of pleading with the Lord to bestow more upon you, plead with yourselves to have confidence in yourselves, and know when to speak and what to speak, what to reveal, and how to carry yourselves and walk before the Lord. And just as fast as you prove to Him that you will preserve everything secret that ought to be - that you will deal out to your neighbours all which you ought and no more, and learn how to dispense your knowledge to your families, friends, neighbours, and brethren, the Lord will bestow upon you, and give you, and bestow upon you, until finally He will say to you, "You shall never fall; your salvation is sealed unto you; you are sealed up unto eternal life and salvation, through your integrity." (*Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 4:371*)

The world is not ready to have all truth revealed to it. Few members of the Church could bear all truth. When we hear of God's mysteries, the first thing we want to do is display our new found knowledge and 'lock horns' with someone who has a closed mind, who wants no more truth as the little he possesses is sufficient. And what could be the results? We lose a friend, we jeopardise our reputation and may have our Church membership put in question. Following the commandments of God is not an easy task:

"It is not always wise to relate all truth. Even Jesus, the Son of God, had to refrain from doing so, and had to restrain His feelings many times for the safety of Himself and His followers, and had to conceal the righteous purposes of His heart in relation to many things pertaining to His Father's Kingdom ..." (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 392*)

“We believe,” wrote Tertullian, “that the Apostles were ignorant of nothing, but that they did not transmit everything they knew, and were not willing to reveal everything to everybody. They did not preach everywhere nor promiscuously, but taught one thing about the nature of Christ in public and another in secret ... some things they taught only to a few” (*Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, p. 104; Improvement Era, May 1965, p. 444*)^a

“One must not recite the mysteries to the uninitiated, lest outsiders who do not understand them make fun of them while they perplex and scandalise.” (*Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, p. 105*)

“the concept of a gospel taught by degrees instead of all at once – ‘precept upon precept;’ line upon line; here a little, and there a little - is the idea that the most important, the highest and the holiest teachings come last.” (*Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, p. 108;*)

“One need only recall the Lord's practice of discussing ‘the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven’ only with his disciples behind closed doors, and of selecting only a few chosen apostles to share in the still greater mysteries ...” (*Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, p. 108*)

What is your next step? Are you ready to progress further along the path of Eternal Progression or are you satisfied with what you now have (for eternity)? Remember the battle never gets easier. There will never be a more convenient time (Satan will see to that) and even though each step you take will bring you closer to God, the sacrifice required may be too great. You must decide if you are seeking worldly comforts or eternal life (Exaltation).

“For a man to lay down his all, his character and reputation, his honour, and applause, his good name among men, his houses, his lands, his brothers and sisters, his wife and

a Also printed in the official LDS magazine *Improvement Era* in June 1965.

children, and even his own life also - counting all things but filth and dross for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ - requires more than mere belief or supposition that he is doing the will of god; but actual knowledge, realising that, when these sufferings are ended, he will enter into eternal rest, and be a partaker of the glory of God.

Let us here observe, that a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation . . . When a man has offered in sacrifice all that he has for truth's sake, not even withholding his life, and believing before God that he has been called to make this sacrifice because he seeks to do his will, he does know, most assuredly, that God does and will accept his sacrifice and offering, and that he has not, nor will not seek his face in vain. Under these circumstances, then, he can obtain the faith necessary for him to lay hold on eternal life.” (*Excepts from Lectures on Faith V, VI*)

We have heard quoted many times a revealed doctrine that “as man is, God once was – as God is man may become.” This doctrine is truth . . . (and leads to more wonderful mysteries) but a person cannot achieve this until he is ready and willing to sacrifice his ‘all’ for the Gospel's sake. Remember this:

“The only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy.” (*Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses 11:268*)

Did you say you were ready to sacrifice your all? Few people are because it may ruin their business image and standing with the world. Are you ready to deny the Church? If you are, you are already out of order. God will not set up another Church. He has restored the Gospel and all the teachings of the Church had their origin from Him. And even though some of these teachings might be a little dormant, may be a little perverted from the original, we still must love it with all our hearts. The Church has its calling to teach first principles and we must not condemn or

hinder it. The purpose of the Church is to carry this message (the first principles) of the Gospel to the world, to officiate in the vicarious work performed in our temples. to help its members develop and learn to know God. Its work is huge and so essential to mankind. A testimony of the Church is an essential part of every mans progression and no matter what some dedicated member may say or do, that may appear a bit out of order, we cannot judge nor can we find fault, but I must love that man for the knowledge he has. He may have a duty to perform and he may be doing it to the best of his ability, understanding and in accordance with the instructions he has received. It has been said that the Church is like a wife bride and the Priesthood or Christ is the husband bridegroom. We must remember that everyone is entitled to his “Free Agency” and no one has the right to exercise force upon another. The wife (through ‘common consent’) may from time to time, disobey her husband and find herself out of order. She may rebel from her husbands instructions, but the husband's instructions still stand and the husband must still honour her and love her. The Children (members) should love and cherish their mother (the Church) and show compassion and patience. The time will come when this somewhat divided house will again be put in order by him who holds the keys of this dispensation (Joseph smith) preparatory to ushering in the millennial work.

“And it shall come to pass that I, the Lord God, will send one mighty and strong, holding the scepter of power (Joseph Smith) in his hand clothed with light for a covering, whose mouth shall utter words, eternal words; while his bowels shall be a fountain of truth, to set in order the house of God, and to arrange by lot the inheritances of the saints whose names are found, and the names of their fathers, and of their children, enrolled in the book of the Lamb of God.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 85:7*)

“Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of my people speaking concerning the church and not individuals, they might have been redeemed even now but behold the have not learned to be obedient, to the things

which I required at their hands, but are full of all manner of evil, and do not impart of their substance, as becometh saints, to the poor and afflicted among them; and are nor united according to the union required by the law of the celestial kingdom: and zion cannot be built up unless it is by the principles of the law of the celestial kingdom. and my people must needs be chastened until they learn obedience, if it must needs be, by the things which they suffer.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 105: 3-7*)

We (the children) must learn from the Church (the mother) all that we can and honour her throughout eternity. However, it is not required to tottle along, tied down by her apron strings, when we have progressed along enough to take a step on our own. (Even though, like many mothers, she insists on not letting go of her children so that they may progress beyond childhood.)

Joseph Smith found it extremely difficult to, not only follow and keep the commandments of God, but in fear of his own life could not even openly teach them. On several occasions it was necessary to use parables to avoid the contentions of his associates that would not understand. One such revelation, pertaining to the fate of the Church and God’s doctrine, can be read in *Doctrine & Covenants 101: 44-62*. Even though the ordinances of the Gospel (as revealed) will be changed, to please the world, there will still remain a ‘residue’ of His house who will keep His commandments. And what, you may ask, are some of the other wonderful mysteries that God will reveal to His faithful in due time? They are many and as soon as you are ready to receive, as soon as you can live the precepts that are now available to you, God will see that you receive them in abundance. But, the essential thing now is to develop “Faith” sufficient to carry you through “The Next Step.” Don’t be complacent in believing that the last step you took was the only step left through your mortal life on the journey of ‘Eternal Progression.’ Much is required of you ... are you ready to proceed? Then remember:

“God does give people at all times what is for them the most important teachings that could possibly be given. For

an unbaptised person nothing could be more important than baptism; for a sinful world repentance is a teaching of transcendent importance. The Catholic theologians are quite right in saying that the Christian world today possesses all that is essential for it to know, for what is essential is simply that which is sufficient to lead men to the next step ... The more exalted, glorious teachings of the gospel, (writes Origen), have always been kept from the vulgar.” (*Hugh Nibley, Since Cumorah, p. 108-9*)

It is hypocritical to assume that you can live by the accepted rules of the world here in mortality, rejecting the higher “more exalted, glorious teachings of the gospel” (Plural Marriage, for one) and still expect to receive the highest degree (exaltation) in the celestial kingdom. You live a lesser law and receive a lesser reward and don't think that God will excuse your ignorance and rationalisations. Plural Marriage is one law (of several) that you must live in this life in order to qualify. Opinions in the Church today are different, but all of God's revelations state the opposite from these opinions. Who do you suppose is right?

“It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the heed and diligence which they give unto him.

And therefore, he that will harden his heart, the same receiveth the lesser portion of the word; and he that will not harden his heart, to him is given the greater portion of the word, until it is given unto him to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full.

And they that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries; and they are taken captive by the devil, and led by his will down to destruction. Now this is what is meant by the chains of hell.” (*Alma 12:9-11*)

God reveals His higher laws; on those laws are attached

certain promises and blessings. Man rejects these laws and begs for some-thing easier to live, which God acknowledges with a lesser law. These lesser laws seemed to always be accompanied by delusions. Man assumes that by living the lesser law he can obtain the blessings of the higher law. Such reasoning is illogical, incorrect, wrong, misleading, phoney and just what Satan wants you to believe.

“Who am I that made man, saith the Lord, that will hold him guiltless that obeys not my commandments? Who am I saith the Lord, that have promised and have not fulfilled?”

I command and men obey not: I revoke and they receive not the blessing.

Then they (the disobedient) say in their hearts; This is not the work of the Lord, for his promises are not fulfilled. But wo unto such, for their reward lurketh beneath, and not from above.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 58:30-33*)

A person will receive exactly what he earns, and what he is willing to live for. No one will be denied his rightful glory, but it's wrong to assume that he'll receive the full blessing by complying to only a portion of the law on which it is predicated.

“There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven before the foundation of this world upon which all blessings are predicated - And when we obtain any blessing from God, it is by obedience to that law upon which it is predicated.” (*Doctrine & Covenants 130:20-21*)

These facts are true with the Law of Consecration vs. the Law of Tithing; Civil Marriage vs. Temple Marriage; Obeying and Not Obeying the Word of Wisdom; Immorality vs. Chastity; Monogamy vs. God's law of Plural Marriage.

“The doctrine of polygamy with the ‘Mormons’ is not one of the kind that in the religious world is classed with ‘non-essentials.’ It is not an item of doctrine that can be yeilded

and faith in the system remain. Polygamy was revealed by God or the entire fabric of their faith is false. To ask them to give up such an item of belief is to ask them to relinquish the whole, to acknowledge their Priesthood a lie, their ordinances a deception, and all they have toiled for, lived for, bled for, prayed for, or hoped for, a miserable failure and waste of life.” (*Millennial Star* 27: 673)

Many faithful members of the Church, worthy Priesthood holders, converts to the Gospel, leaders in wards and stakes, returned missionaries and even those in higher positions are receiving the testimony of the truthfulness of this “law of the Priesthood” and submitting to the calling. Unfortunately, the principle must be lived (as it was during Joseph Smith's day) underground and without the sanction of the Church. Many have been excommunicated when the knowledge is exposed and yet others are living in our wards without such lethal repercussions.

“A new, informal survey pegs the number of Fundamentalist Mormons [who believe in Plural Marriage] in the Intermountain West and other areas at 37,000” (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 August 2005)

Is your faith strong enough? Do you desire to serve God at all risks? Will you not betray your trust or the God of heaven? Is exaltation in the highest degree your goal? Are you ready for more light and knowledge, more revealed truth? Can you accept the additional responsibility and serve God with all your heart? Do you desire to be among the ‘residue of his house’ who kept all of His commandments?

If you do - God is calling you!