

THE BASIS OF BRIGHAMITE POLYGAMY:

A Criticism upon the (so called) Revelation of July 12th, 1843.

By Elder Jason W. Briggs. Published by the Reorganized Church of Christ, at Lamoni, Iowa.

THE BASIS OF POLYGAMY.

The revelation purporting to have been given July 12th, 1843, first paragraph, contains several noticeable points.

1. It represents Joseph Smith as enquiring of the Lord, "Wherein I, the Lord, justified Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; Moses, David, and Solomon, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines."

It is curious to contemplate the principle on which Isaac was justified in Polygamy and Concubinage, when there is not a shadow of proof that he practiced either; while the evidence of justification in Abraham's case, is the fact that the Lord commanded a separation, requiring that both the divorced wife, or concubine, and her child should leave the country, and an express commandment that the child should not be an heir. If this is justification, we beg to know what terms would express condemnation? And as respects David and Solomon, is it not passing strange that Joseph Smith, who had translated, as he said by the gift of God, the Book of Mormon, in which it is written that the acts of plurality on their part were abominable; here is the passage:

"Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord."—Jacob, chapter 2, Book of Mormon.

Was it not strange, we say, that with this statement so lately received from the Lord, Joseph Smith should ask the question how the Lord justified these same men? But if we suppose that he was under the condemnation common to the church at one time for disregarding the Book of Mormon and the former commandments, and in this darkness did ask so causeless a question, the only consistent answer would be, "How is it written; how readest thou?"

2. The doctrine of concubinage, as authorized by this paragraph, ought not to pass unnoticed; for, as we learn in paragraph fourteen, it is a holy institution. We are there told that "Abraham received concubines, and they bore children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness." In the absence of any light upon this branch of the subject from the great commentator, Mr. Pratt, we only have recourse to the ordinary sources of information to determine the distinction between a wife and a concubine. Mr. Pratt is lucid upon the former, but shady upon the latter. The

text is, "The doctrines of many wives and concubines."—Mr. Pratt. Now the real status of a concubine in the "new and everlasting covenant" of this paragraph is important; because, failing to comply with its requirements, subjects one to great inconvenience in this world, and in the world to come,— "then are ye damned," saith the text.

The distinction between a wife and a concubine is kept up from Abraham to Beltashazar; but the proportion is not uniform. While Solomon had seven hundred wives and three hundred concubines, Rehoboam had eighteen wives and sixty concubines. But the clue to the real distinction is found in Esther 2: 14, where those young women who had been prostituted by the king, are called concubines; and in the sworn statement of Brigham Young in which he claims but one lawful wife, but at the same time confesses having been sealed to a plurality. These two testimonies make the distinction clear. Among the Greeks they were called courtezans; the English and French call them mistresses—kept mistresses. Now then the full import of the inquiry appears, to-wit: to know the justifying phases of the doctrine of having many wives and mistresses.

What an eye opener is this paragraph; though it requires considerable preparation as is therein suggested, in order to receive it; and this preparation requires the repudiation of all the revelations and commandments to the Church upon this subject, so that when this revelation was adopted, it was consistent to lay aside the books, and substitute "council," or "do as you are told;" for Polygamy can only exist under a despotism.

Paragraph second discredits all covenants, contracts, vows, obligations, or associations made and entered into outside of the "everlasting covenant" of paragraph one; whereas, Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 111, par. 4, says, "All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this Church, should be held sacred and [be] fulfilled."

This article requires the Church to hold sacred such covenants of marriage, and the fulfillment of such contracts is the consummation of a purpose, or the end for which the contract is made or ordained. Now what is this purpose—this end? We are informed in Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 64, par. 3, "For marriage is ordained of God unto man,"—not to a few favorites through "the President," but unto man,—the race, the species. This ordinance is not written

upon stone, but upon the heart; it is the constitution or ordinance of God in nature upon that subject; and here is the law under that constitution, same paragraph, "Wherefore, it is lawful that he, [man, any man], should have one wife." Here is the ordinance or constitution of marriage, and the law which fixes one wife for one man. "for they twain shall be one flesh." And now what is the purpose or end of all this? Here it is, "That the earth might answer the end of its creation, and that it might be filled with the measure [or number] of man;" therefore since the design, or end of marriage, is accomplished in this world, of course the whole institution and appurtenances thereunto belonging are confined to this world, just as Jesus taught; Luke 20: 34, 35:

"The children of this world marry and are given in marriage, but they which shall be accounted worthy to obtain that world and [through] the resurrection, neither marry nor are [they] given in marriage."

But this paragraph says, this new covenant, new authority and keys are given to Joseph for "the last days," and since he retains his priesthood and keys, and that it is a forbidden presumption to suppose that another will take his place, then as we have before remarked, the whole scheme for establishing the doctrine of "many wives and concubines" is without a legal status, and has expired by limitations found in this paragraph.

The third paragraph is a repetition of the second, with this addition, such as refuse or neglect to receive the "covenant" referred to in paragraph one, are to suffer a loss, but are to be in their "saved condition" like the angels. This conflicts with paragraph one, which says of such, "They shall be damned, saith the Lord God." Now one of two things is evident; either the Lord who dictated these two paragraphs was very forgetful, or the copier, (for the original is confessedly burned), has sadly blundered; but the plot thickens in this paragraph.

These poor "angels" who did not abide the "new and everlasting covenant" of paragraph one, to establish the doctrine of "many wives and concubines," not being enlarged in that direction, are to abide separately and singly, and "are not gods;" whereas, those who *are* enlarged, by having "many wives and concubines," *are* gods. The greater the enlargement, of course, the greater the "dominion and exaltation." Why the single, or angels, can not attain to exaltation is shown in paragraph five; "Because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they can not pass; they can not therefore inherit my glory." This puts it a little stronger than the "son of the morning" put it when he said, "I will ascend up and be like God," he did not think of passing by "the angels and the gods;"

yet for this he was "thrust down from the presence of God and the Son, and was called *Perdition*, for the heavens wept over him." All who follow this example are called *Sons of Perdition*. Here is the father outstripped (in impudence) by the sons.

But why is it necessary to pass by the angels and gods to "inherit my glory?" Do not they dwell in glory? Jesus did not know of any glory or exaltation of this kind, but expressly said of those who were "accounted worthy of that world," that they were "equal unto the angels;" and these were "children of God, being children of the resurrection."—Luke 20: 36. But polygamists, according to this paragraph under consideration aspire to something above and beyond. It looks like the sentiment of him who, in the "falling away," was to be "revealed, who opposeth [these teachings of Jesus] and exalteth himself above all that is called God."—2 Thess. 2: 3, 4. Angels are sometimes called gods, then there is precisely the idea of our paragraph, "They shall pass by the angels and the gods"—all that are called gods. But we might inquire where will they stop after passing the angels and the gods on the way to prepare themselves a place? that is, create worlds and people them, says Mr. Pratt. It does not matter where they stop, for having got clear past the jurisdiction of angels and gods, they, of course, have become *a law unto themselves*. (sec. 7, par. 8), and can then *do as they please*, as a reward for having here done "as they were told." But in this paragraph six it is enjoined that those who have entered upon their "enlargement" shall commit no murder, whereby to shed innocent blood." This clause was not duly considered when "blood atonement" was decided upon and promulgated by Brigham Young and his satellites, J. M. Grant, D. H. Wells and O. Hyde. Gentlemen, this clause will damn you in that day when "inquisition is made for blood" and for those who have shed it.

The eighth paragraph contains one point that is a key to the whole theory of this enlargement. It is for the continuation of the lives—"eternal lives." We should probably have remained profoundly ignorant of the sense of this paragraph, had not Mr. Pratt spoken. Now we know that this clause means that the whole Celestial and enlarged retinue, from Lamech downward, including as Mr. Pratt shows, most of the savages of ancient and modern times, when they have passed by the angels and the gods, and hit upon a location which, of course, will be void or empty; they will proceed to fill it, and every one of the "many wives and concubines," then and there present, will enter upon the literal realization of the boyish rillery of Rebecca's brothers at her departure in search of a husband,

to-wit: "Be thou the mother of thousands of millions."—Gen. 24, 60. Such a continuous multiplication being the "continuation of the lives" and the chief glory. But in the face of this, is the promise to the righteous Enoch of a name in the house of God, "better than of sons and daughters."—Isa. 56; 4. This spoils your whole theory and robs this enlargement of any value.

Paragraph nine provides for polygamists as follows:

"If he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, or all manner of blasphemies; yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation."

This paragraph is so revolting to the whole tenor of the gospel, that if the devil ever wrote a revelation with his own fingers, this paragraph must be the one. How favored are polygamists! They may indulge in any single sin, any transgression, or in all, and in "all manner of blasphemies," and it will not stand in the way of their exaltation in the least; but this paragraph puts in the clause found in paragraph six, "You shall do no murder." Now in Ezekiel 3; 20, and 33; 18, we are told that when a righteous man doth "turn from his righteousness and commit iniquity, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered."

Paragraph ten defines the blasphemy against the Holy Ghost to be murder. This murder is one of the "all manner of blasphemies," and will not stand in the way of entering into their exaltation. It is true, paragraph ten contradicts in this sense paragraph six, where murder would seem to stand in the way; but with the definition and with the promise in paragraph nine, even murder is no impediment. But the definition is false according to Doctrine and Covenants, sec. 92, par. 4, where we are told that those who shall not be forgiven in this world nor in the world to come, are those who "deny the Holy Spirit after having received it;" of whom it is said, it had "been better for them never to have been born." These are the ones of whom Jesus speaks, applying these same words, that they should not be forgiven in this world nor the world to come. (Matthew 12; 32)

It really looks as if this document so far had been gotten up as a sort of a caricature upon all prior revelations; the author seems to go out of his way to incur falsehood and absurdity; for instance, in paragraph 11, it says of Abraham, that he "hath entered into his exaltation, and sitteth upon his throne." Now the only promise of thrones to "any" is "When the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory, ye shall also sit upon thrones," &c.—Matt. 19: 28. In Luke 1; 32, we are told what throne Jesus shall sit upon; and in Daniel, seventh chapter, we learn when he will take possession of

it—in the future; and St. Paul, in Heb. 11: 40, says of Abraham that he, with others, "without us should not be made perfect," or get a throne. The writer of this eleventh paragraph seemed to have forgotten everything except the one idea of exaltation for polygamists, and so enthroned Abraham before the King of kings has received his throne. Having fastened to Abraham, as to an anchor, the polygamous ship, this paragraph is made to say that Abraham received all things whatsoever he received by revelation and commandment, and this will include Miss Hagar, of course. In paragraph thirteen we have it, "God commanded Abraham, and, forsooth, Sarah gave Hagar," &c., one of the many things given to Abraham.

The case of David, wherein Saul's wives, together with the "house of Israel and of Judah" is given him, it is said, "If that had been too little, I would, moreover, have given unto thee such and such things." "More wives," says Mr. Pratt; "more wives," echoes all polygamists, from the wide mouthed cannon, down to the veriest popgun in Utah. Then are these other wives, which in 2 Samuel 20: 3, are called concubines, here and in the paragraph under consideration, called "things." This will enable these women thus entangled to properly estimate each other, and instead of calling each other "Auntie," as is now the case, they should now be called "things."—Celestial things. And if the wife, as Mr. Pratt shows, is "property," what are these things, but an incumbrance upon that property? And how fervent have the prayers of the wives of Utah ascended up for the removal of these incumbrances! But in concluding upon this paragraph, we observe that it says, "Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac, nevertheless it was written, 'Thou shalt not kill.'" The writer of this paragraph forgot that this,—one of the ten commandments,—was not written till more than four hundred years after Abraham.

Paragraphs fourteen and fifteen repeat the story of Abraham's concubines, and that having children by them "was accounted unto him for righteousness;" whereas, Paul says, Gal 3: 6, "Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." And in Gal. 4: 22, 23, we are told that the seed by the bond woman, this very concubine of Abraham, was "after the flesh;" and in verse 24, that it "gendereth to bondage." The same oversight occurs here as elsewhere, of ringing in Isaac, and of enthroning these polygamists with their concubines too soon; "they have entered into their exaltation, and sit upon thrones; and are not angels, but gods."

Paragraph sixteen contains a statement that needs profound consideration. In defining adultery, it says:

"If a man receive a wife in the new and everlasting

covenant, [of paragraph one], and if she be with another man, and I have not appointed unto her [this privilege] by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery, and shall be destroyed."

Here is one of the advanced principles of Brighamism. If to "be with another man," other than her husband, when this was not "appointed unto her," is adultery, what would the same act be where it was appointed? Of course it would not be so. And here it is clearly shown that such appointment is contemplated as part of the *high prerogatives* of the holy anointing through which "many wives and concubines" and gods are made and endowed. As terrible as this looks in the light of common sense, reason, and a moderate scale of morality, it is quite consistent with the entire scheme of this, so-called, revelation. Eternal life is the "continuation of the lives," or the begetting and bearing of children through all time and all eternity, and therefore any cessation in the progress of multiplication, or "enlargement," entails "a loss." And in case of the absence of the man with "many wives and concubines," as it sometimes happens for a term of years; is he, while thus circulating abroad the principles of this enlargement, to "suffer loss" at home? This paragraph provides for such cases, by showing that some one or more *may* be "appointed unto her" through the "holy anointing." And this appointment, of course, will be made through the President, or a proxy, or *pro tem*. Such as are designated through this appointment are fully described in Jeremiah 5: 8, and 18: 27, "They were as fed horses in the morning, every one neighed after his neighbor's wife."

Paragraphs seventeen and eighteen are but the tenth repetition of the vast authority given polygamists.

Paragraph nineteen repeats what is said in paragraph sixteen, namely: that the one holding the priesthood revealed in this document, "shall have power, by the power of my holy priesthood, to *take her*, [the wife of one man who is in transgression], and give her unto him who hath been faithful." Here "the President" is authorized, when he learns that a man with wives is not faithful, to *take* them from him and *give* them to another. And if he has power to *take* and to *give*, it includes the power to retain them if he choose. It is affirmed by some ancient writers, that this identical personal prerogative was granted to Julius Caesar, by the Roman Senate; though Voltaire disputes it on the ground that it is too monstrous to be believed, even of heathen Rome. However that may be, we can not tell; but the revelation of July 12th, 1843, gives this power and prerogative to "the president" of polygamists. Some will suggest to me that it is better to hush a great

scandal, a deep disgrace, and will say in the poetic measure of Jasher:

"Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph."—2 Samuel 1: 20.

But Mr. John Stuart Mill says, that "to cure the evils of society, these evils must be named and shown up," &c. Besides, the abominations and corrupting fruits of polygamy are already known both in "Gath and in Askelon," and the daughters of the uncircumcised Philistines at Washington have already pointed with a contemptuous sneer at the delegate of this "enlargement" scheme, and pronounced Aha, Aha; you "nasty polygamist." Under such circumstances it can not be covered out of respect to decency, and the credit of humanity; but must be treated.

We therefore pass on to paragraph nineteen, where the peculiar power and privileges of the President are further asserted in these terms:

"Verily I say unto you, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you *give* any one on earth, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings."

Ann Eliza was an exception in the case of the President himself, to say nothing of the one that is missing altogether. Further on in this paragraph is a promise to Joseph, "Go therefore, and I will make a way for your escape, as I accepted the offering of Abraham of his son Isaac." Now Abraham and Isaac both lived to a good old age, and died in peace; while Joseph lived only a few months after the pretended date of this pretended revelation, and then was slain by his enemies. The promise was a failure. The Lord did not "provide a way for his escape" from his enemies, but he fell by them.

Paragraph twenty opens with the recognition of Emma Smith as the wife of Joseph, "whom I have given unto you." When did she become his wife? We answer, before the church was organized in 1830; and, of course, that contract of marriage was made before coming into the church, but here it is called giving her to him of the Lord. This is a correct principle shining out of this medley of contradiction and absurdity, impudence and blasphemy, like a single pearl in a sea of mud. She was given to him just as all others are given, not by a special act, but by the constitution of their being wherein it is written, "It is not good to be alone." So all the pretense in this valley about the Gentile marriage of Joseph and Emma, and its consequent nullity, is dissipated by the very document relied upon to establish it. Now, since Emma Smith, referred to in this paragraph, is then the Godgiven wife of Joseph on the 12th of July, 1843 the law of the church at that time required him to "cleave unto her and none

else." The next clause is as follows, "That she stay herself, and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her." That is, the Lord commands Joseph to make some kind of an offer to her, and then commands her, through him, not to accept that offer. ("Oh what a tangled web they weave, who practice solely to deceive.") Further on it says, "Let my handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph." What? Had Joseph already entered upon his "enlargement" before this revelation was given, which Mr. Pratt shows was the sole warrant for it; and without the consent previously obtained of his first wife, as the same great author shows he should have done to make it legal, and as paragraph twenty-four enjoins? And worse than all, previous to this revelation it was sinful; for "every member of the church was strictly limited to one wife." And then what about the preparation which the Lord tells him in paragraph one to make, in order to "receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for behold I reveal unto you a new and everlasting covenant." This covenant, as we have already seen, was to show him how to enlarge upon "the principle and doctrine of having many wives and concubines;" and yet this paragraph shows that he had already understood and entered upon the practice. The whole thing looks to us at this point like a first-class burlesque, and we are tempted at this moment under this impression to drop its farther consideration. But a good brother assures us that thousands of good honest men and women in these valleys believe that document to be a revelation from God, the Creator of the universe. We therefore repress our emotions, and proceed to evolve from this mixture the necessary consequences. Mr. Pratt establishes that at this point, if Joseph, or any other member of the church had taken other wives, they were in transgression; and so far as the "enlargement" had proceeded, it was, as the Book of Mormon says, "Abominable before the Lord." Now mark what follows. In ordinary cases of sin, repentance or punishment would follow; but here it is different. The Lord sanctifies the sin, and adopts the "abomination" as a Celestial order! If this is a "nest egg of hell" instead of Celestial order, that which is hatched from it will justify such conclusions. But we pause for reflection.

After due reflection we return to this momentous paragraph 20. We had proceeded with this paragraph so far as to learn that the Lord decided to Celestialize sin-abomination. Hence "Emma Smith" is charged to "receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure,

shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God."

What! some of those whom the Lord had given to Joseph expressly to "raise up a righteous seed," *not pure*; having deceived the Prophet and the Lord too? Who gave them to him; for they "said they were pure" when they were not? What naughty girls to impose upon the Lord and the Prophet in this manner! They deserve, in addition to being "destroyed," the severest censure of all the pure-minded Polygamists of Utah. Then follows that luminous idea which we have noticed already, that these extra "wives and concubines" are *things*. — "He shall be made ruler over many things." "and henceforth I will strengthen him." But the Lord did not "strengthen him" from this time, any more than he made a way for his escape from his enemies, as promised in the preceding paragraph.

Paragraph twenty-one begins by enjoining "my handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else." This same commandment was given to Joseph in Doc. & Cov. sec. 13, par. 7, in these words, "Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else." Yet in the face of this, as we have seen, Joseph is now entitled to cleave unto "all those [others] that have been given" unto him, while she is required to observe the spirit of the commandment given him in section 13; but he is here released from it.

The next clause of this paragraph proposes a demonstration of the power and authority attending this new covenant; for it says:

"But if she will not abide this commandment, she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law."

But, of Joseph, it says:

"I will bless him, and multiply him, and give unto him an hundred fold in this world, of fathers and mothers, [that is, Mr. Pratt says fathers and mothers-in-law], brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children," &c

Here is a promise and a threatening both designed to fix the authority of this document. The Lord virtually says, I will let the heathen know by my acts of wrath upon whoever oppose Polygamy how much I love it, and by my special protection and blessing upon those who receive it. I will demonstrate the same thing; and Emma Smith is to be made an example, if she rejects it, for all time; while Joseph, on the other hand, is to be an example for those who receive it. That Emma Smith rejected the revelation and its teachings is often asserted in this valley and generally admitted, and Brigham Young says, in a discourse at the special Conference in Salt Lake City, in August, 1852, "The original or copy of this revelation was burnt up." Again, "Sr Emma burnt the original." Again he says, "In the meantime it was in the possession of Bishop Whitae, he wished the privilege to

copy it, which Bro. Joseph granted." Now if, "Sr. Emma burnt the original and the original copy, [made by Whitney], was burnt up," it might be asked what was it that remained?

But to return to the threatenings and the promise. Emma must be destroyed, and Joseph must receive, among other blessings, an *hundred fold of wives in this world*; but this, like the promise to "strengthen and provide a way for his escape," proved a failure; and the threatening failed also. Now I appeal to every candid believer in Polygamy in Utah to consider and answer to their own conscience, whether in case Emma Smith having, as she did, rejected that revelation, had been within a few months after, murdered by a mob, would you not have regarded it as strong proof of the revelation? Would you not have pointed to it as a rod of terror to all other refractory first wives? And if Joseph had survived and received his "hundred fold of wives," the demonstration in favor of polygamy would have been complete. You must admit this. Then we demand what does it prove when, as the facts demonstrate, the threatened destruction falls upon the head of the faithful Joseph, and the rebellious Emma, as the Elect Lady, is not even moved out of her place, but remains with her children a living monument of the original faith—a standing protest against the "damnable heresies" of the "seducing spirits," the real authors of this document in question. "Whoever hath ears to hear, let them hear."

"For thus saith the Lord, the ears of this people are dull of hearing, and their foolish hearts are darkened; who call good, evil; and put darkness for light, and have chosen falsehood instead of truth."

Farther on, same paragraph, it says: "And again, verily I say unto my handmaid, forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses;" but in the preceding two paragraphs we are told that he has been faithful, and is assured of his exaltation. If the trespass which she was required to forgive, was the taking of "all those" referred to before, then that was sin, and required repentance in order to forgiveness. This paragraph closes with a promise to Emma Smith, in case she will receive the revelation, that "I the Lord thy God will bless her and multiply her." We have already learned what is meant by multiplying Joseph, Abraham and others; it is bestowing upon them an hundred fold of wives, mothers-in-law, &c; or, in the language of the revelation, "many wives and concubines." But what does it mean here, if not what we inferred from paragraph sixteen?

In paragraph twenty two is the repetition of the promise to Joseph, "And behold and lo I am with him, as I was with Abraham

thy father." Falsity is stamped upon this as upon every other promise peculiar to this document. Abraham lived to a good old age and fell asleep in the bosom of his family; while Joseph was cut off by his lawless and ruthless enemies, and in the prime and vigor of life.

Again in paragraph twenty-three it is repeated, "Let no one therefore set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him." But they did "set on" him, and the Lord did not "provide a way for his escape," as provided in paragraph nineteen.

Paragraph 24 say:

"If any man espouse a virgin and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he can not commit adultery, for they belong to him," &c.

Here polygamy is offered unqualifiedly to "any man" who desires it, at least to the extent of "ten virgins" apiece. Though Mr. Pratt, in *Seer*, vol. 1, p. 81, contradicts this broad permission. He says:

"The church, therefore, are still restricted by the severest penalties to one wife according to the Book of Mormon, unless in individual cases where the Lord shall, by revelation direct otherwise."

The idea contained in this paragraph, that the first must consent, in order legally to get the other nine, is spread out very smoothly by Mr. Pratt on the same page of the *Seer*, as follows:

"Before any man takes the least step toward getting another wife, it is his duty to consult the feelings of the wife he already has, and obtain her consent;" though Mr. Pratt had just said that the first step was to consult the *President* and get a revelation. How many first steps are there in this certain way? But it would seem, from paragraph twenty-four, and these statements, that the first wife holds the key to the whole scheme of "enlargement," holding the absolute veto power. But when we reflect that paragraph twenty-one provides, that in case she do not consent and minister unto him according to his "desire," "she shall be destroyed," her choice is a lean one, and from the seeming "queen of that realm," she descends, in fact, to the condition of a domestic stool pigeon, to entice the other nine into the trap; for she must "minister unto him"—or serve him in his desires to multiply; and her only choice is between thus acting, or to "be destroyed," as is also repeated in paragraph twenty-five, "She shall be destroyed, saith the Lord you God; for I will destroy her."

After repeating this threatening to destroy, Abraham and Hagar are again referred to in connection with the bearing "the souls of men," as the continuation of the work of the Father, in the previous paragraph. But one fact is lost sight of by the writer of this paragraph twenty five, and that is the divorce of Hagar, which will preclude her "continuation of the lives," or bearing in connection with Abraham, "the souls of

men."—to all eternity, &c. This paragraph and the revelation concludes as follows:

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you hereafter; therefore, [seeing it is to be continued], let this suffice for the present," &c. Amen.

We have examined this document by comparing it with the revelations contained in the books and find that it contradicts them all, in nearly all the essential points contained in it; and must, therefore decide that it is spurious. We have also compared it with itself and find it equally contradictory, and again, must decide that it is spurious. That it originated in deception and fraud, there can be no doubt, as these characteristics apply at every step in the progress of the scheme which it ostensibly inaugurates.

Having disposed of the authenticity of that document for the present, at least, we may enquire after its genuineness. It purports to have been given through Joseph Smith; which, if true, our conclusions respecting its character would make him either the victim or the instrument of deception and fraud. It must be remembered that its appearance, other than in some dark corner, if indeed there, was not until August, 1852, over eight years after the death of Joseph Smith. And when introduced, certain statements are made, which, if true, would seem to establish the claim that it came through him. This statement of facts is, that when the revelation was given, Emma Smith got possession of it in its original and "burnt it." Upon this point we subjoin the following questions and answers from a memorandum of an interview with Sr. Emma Smith referred to, (now Mrs. Bidamon), at Nauvoo, in April, 1867.

J. W. BRIGGS.—Mrs. Bidamon, have you seen the revelation on Polygamy, published by Orson Pratt, in the *Seer*, in 1852? MRS. B.—I have.

J. W. B.—Have you read it? MRS. B.—I have read it, and heard it read.

J. W. B.—Did you ever see that document in manuscript, previous to its publication by Pratt?

MRS. B.—I never did.

J. W. B.—Did you ever see any document of that kind, purporting to be a revelation to authorize Polygamy? MRS. B.—No. I never did.

J. W. B.—Did Joseph Smith ever teach you the principles of Polygamy, as being revealed to him, or as a correct and righteous principle? MRS. B.—He never did.

J. W. B.—What about that statement of Brigham Young, that you burnt the original manuscript of that revelation? MRS. B.—It is false in all its parts, made out of whole cloth, without any foundation in truth.

This certainly stamps the most circumstantial fact alleged, in support of the genuineness of that document, as a base fraud, in keeping with the document itself. False facts are usually alleged to support false theories. Thus at every step in the investigation of this subject, proof develops how untenable is the position assumed for Polygamy, both in its alleged facts, its principles, and its fruits.

Those who have considered attentively what has preceded this upon this subject, will have seen the exceeding flimsiness of the grounds on which Polygamy is based;

and still the evidence against it, in all its pretenses, accumulates which ever way we direct our thoughts upon that subject. For instance, in *Doctrine and Covenants*, par. 5, sec. 58. (new edition), we read:

"Let no man break the law of the land; for he that keepeth the law of God, hath no need to break the law of the land."

Now Joseph Smith or the Church could not receive that revelation of 1843, and obey it, without breaking the law of the land where they then resided. Nor can any obey it now, in any of the States or Territories of the United States, without doing the same thing.

This *item of law*, as well as "the law of the land," must be trampled under foot in the practice of Polygamy; and as we are told that "God doth not vary from that which he hath said, he can not therefore be the author or giver of that document.

Again, on February 1st, 1844, six months after the date of the polygamic revelation, appears a notice over the signature of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, to the effect that one "Hiram Brown had been cut off from the Church for teaching polygamy and other false and corrupt doctrines."—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 6, page 423. Now can any one believe that at the time this notice was signed and published by those men, that they had in their possession that document, and believed it a commandment from God, in which polygamy is declared celestial, and whoever rejected it was threatened with destruction and damnation? Would they rank it as they do in that notice, with "other false and corrupt doctrines?" Were they guilty of such hypocrisy and duplicity, and still the accepted servants of God?

Further, on March 15th, 1844, Hyrum Smith published a Card of Warning to the Church, in which he refers to somebody as teaching that having many wives, &c., was lawful, and taught in Nauvoo, and says:

"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."—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, page 474.

Did Hyrum Smith, at that time, know of and believe that revelation authorizing polygamy? If he did, he was a deceiver in using the language he did. To these might be added numerous statements contained in the *Times and Seasons*, for near two years after the date of that pretended revelation, denouncing such doctrine and showing that it was unknown to the church. But it is sometimes asked, "Is it not possible after all that Joseph Smith pretended to have that, or some revelation upon that subject, probably authorizing Polygamy?" We answer freely, it is possible. Then what follows? Why, upon that supposition we must regard him either as deceived or a deceiver. It could in no sense sanctify what the law of God makes sin and abomination. The burden of proof is upon those who allege

that he gave it. And all the proof adduced by them is second-hand statements, made by those who had perjured themselves in denying it, if they now speak truth; and consequently, have made themselves ineligible as witnesses to testify at all.

Again; upon the trial of Sydney Rigdon, by Brigham Young and his associates, Rigdon's revelations were condemned and set aside, on the ground that they had not been submitted to proper authority for examination and sanction. This same rule applied to the document of 1843 requires it to be set aside. The *measure* they meted to Sydney is here measured to them. Out of their own mouth they stand condemned for introducing that document in a clandestine manner. To the foregoing may be added the denial of the genuineness of that document by Sydney Rigdon; who, as First Counselor, was entitled to know and to speak advisedly upon that point. Thus the evidence, and lack of evidence, completely invalidates the pretense that Joseph Smith was the author of that document called a revelation. Let us look elsewhere for its origin, and the origin of the doctrine of polygamy among the Latter Day Saints. In a speech of Brigham Young of June 21st, 1874, (see *Deseret News* of July 1st of that year), is found the following statement relative to the origin of the doctrine of Polygamy.

"While we were in England, (in 1839 and 40), I think the Lord manifested to me by vision and his Spirit things that I did not then understand. I never opened my mouth to any one concerning them, until I returned to Navoo; Joseph had never mentioned this; there had never been a thought of it in the Church that I ever knew anything about at that time; but I had this for myself, and I kept it to myself."

What was this that was manifested to him, that he had for himself, and kept to himself so close; this that neither Joseph nor the Church had ever thought of before. He continues:

"And when I returned home, and Joseph revealed those things to me, then I understood the reflections that were upon my mind while in England. But this [communication with Joseph on the subject] was not until after I had told him what I understood—this was in 1841. The revelation was given in 1843, but the doctrine was revealed before this."

This is lifting one of the early disguises,—an uncovering of his trail so long obscured. Here is an acknowledgement that the doctrine of Polygamy was first revealed to him. He "had it for himself" before "Joseph or the Church" even thought of it. Well done, Brigham! Why did not you tell the people this in the start, that Polygamy was introduced through your revelation? The only answer to this is, it was thought essential to the success of this doctrine, that it should have the sanction of Joseph; but now the egotism of age was too strong even for his cunning. But what does he mean when he says, "The revelation was given in 1843, but the doctrine was revealed before that?" He can only mean that the

revelation which he "had for himself" previous to 1841, was in 1843 put into proper shape to present to others; and the process of this shaping was given some years since, upon the stand in this city, by W. W. Phelps, as follows:

"We were some ten or twelve days in writing it—I wrote some of it."

Now if we can determine the company indicated by the word *we*, then we shall have found the authors of that document. This *we* will certainly include the one first receiving the revelation and the speaker. Now the document, (as fixed in 1843), par. 20, shows that Polygamy was already being practiced, and consequently, the revelation was *ex post facto* in its character; legalizing acts already committed; and if practiced before, we ask, By whom was it practiced? Of course it was by him or them who had it revealed for himself; for the church had not yet "thought of it." And in this connection we can understand the statement of Wm. Marks, made October 15th, 1859, *True Latter Day Saints' Herald*, vol. 1, page 26, referring to a conversation with Joseph Smith, a few days before the latter went to Carthage; he says:

"He [Joseph] said 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 are indelibly stamped upon my mind. He said he had long desired to have a talk with me on the subject of Polygamy; he said it would eventually prove the overthrow of the church. He was satisfied it was a cursed doctrine, and every exertion must be made to put it down. He said that he would go before the congregation and proclaim against it; and I must go into the High Council, and he would prefer charges against them in transgression, and I must sever them from the church; unless they made ample satisfaction. The mob commenced to gather about Carthage a few days after; therefore, there was nothing done concerning it."

This statement, as regards the sentiments of Joseph Smith, corresponds with the before-cited statements of his own and Hyrum's, and is conclusive as to his views and designs concerning Polygamy; all of which is utterly at variance with the pretense that he at that time was in possession of that document purporting to authorize Polygamy and believed it a commandment of God.

Thus, upon a careful and impartial survey of the subject, the alleged evidences and arguments in its support, we are forced to the conclusion, that it is, as expressed by Joseph, a "cursed doctrine;" a fraud in its origin; false in principle; ruinous in practice; and founded in selfishness and lust; and only maintained by degradation on the one hand, and violence and despotism on the other; and as a system it constitutes in its connections the sink, or "mystery of iniquity," into which the latter day apostasy has taken the fatal plunge; like the mill stone cast into the sea, whose future is the depths of darkness; except they repent and bring forth works accordingly.

SALT LAKE CITY, Utah, July, 1875.