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THE JOSEPH SMITH INTERVIEW.

The following letter of Elder Robert J. Parker, missionary of the Reorganized Church to Utah, and the reply thereto by Elder Joseph Luff of Independence, Missouri, are sufficiently suggestive touching the false and malicious publication made by Messrs. Spencer and Company under the title of "Copy of Interview" with "Joseph Smith, President of the Reorganized Church," as to forever settle the question of the unholy scheme entered into by these evidence manufacturers, and by permission of Elder Luff we give the

correspondence to the public, that those who falsified the interview with Joseph Smith and those who seek to maintain the false and absurd publication of the same by Mr. Spencer, *et. al.*, by misrepresenting the position of Elder Luff, may be rebuked together:

INQUIRY OF ELDER ROBT. J. PARKER.

SPANISH FORK, Utah, Aug. 16, 1898.
BRO. JOSEPH LUFF;

Dear Bro.:—Since we have been laboring here we had presented to us several times that interview held between four or five Utah elders and Bro. Joseph Smith in your presence. They say Bro. Joseph denied it, but you would not deny it. Would like to have a statement from you regarding the matter. Have had pretty good crowds since coming here. Feeling quite well. Yours as ever,

R. J. PARKER.

Address SPRINGVILLE, Utah.

REPLY OF ELDER LUFF.

STONINGTON, Me., Sept. 4, 1898.
ELDER ROBERT J. PARKER,

Springville, Utah;

Dear Bro.:—Upon my arrival here this morning, yours of the 16th of August was found awaiting me, having been forwarded from home. It finds me with somewhat improved health, for which I feel thankful to God.

Regarding the statement which you say is being circulated there, to the

effect that I would not deny the correctness of the report published in the *Deseret News* regarding the interview had in my house and in my presence, between President Joseph Smith and Elder Spencer and three other elders of the Utah Church, I have only this to say and *I put it plainly*: IT IS FALSE. I have denied its correctness more than fifty times, and many of the Utah elders whom I have met in various places know that I have denied it with emphasis to them and pointed out some of its almost self-evident falsities. It is a garbled thing in some of its parts. It is disarranged as to the order of the real interview, and in other instances it states the *very opposite* of what President Smith said. When the thing was first shown to me I denounced it as a vicious misrepresentation of the interview and wrote to President Smith to that effect. I pointed out several of its bad features to different parties.

The statement afterwards published by President Smith relative to the interview is correct, and a copy of it can be had at *Herald Office*. Surely those people who account President Smith to be a *knave* will not pretend to believe him to be a *fool*; yet such he must needs be if in that interview he said what those elders published over their names, for it sets forth a direct contradiction of his public and private utterances and all his writings on the subjects involved, as can be easily discovered by reference to said writings. If Elder Spencer intended to honestly represent President Smith, he ought to have pursued a different course from that which he followed. He pre-

tended to have some questions down in writing and would ask one at a time, then begin writing when an answer was given, and that, too, without hearing the answers in full. He never showed us a line he had written nor read a line of it in our hearing. As these men left my house door I turned to President Smith and said: "The next time you hear from that interview you will scarcely be able to identify it," and the sequel proved that I was correct. It was a scandalous piece of work and far beneath the dignity of men, to say nothing of *elders* of a *church*, and you are perfectly at liberty to use this statement from me wherever and however and whenever you please, and to let everybody know that I brand the *Deseret News'* published report of said interview as an unprincipled thing and as bearing the indications that characterize the work of unscrupulous men.

Experience of several years among men who have been seeking to bolster up Utah Mormonism has confirmed me in the belief that I was slow to accept at first; *viz:* that it would require more than an ordinary life time to follow up and expose the malicious misrepresentations of the Reorganization that have been created and peddled by advocates of the Utah Church philosophy. It may be possible that in Utah, Elder Spencer's word may be taken in preference to ours; but the all-seeing God of truth knows who are publishing the naked facts, and to him my testimony is committed, awaiting the judgment hour.

Yours for truth,

JOSEPH LUFF.

The attempt of these Utah elders under the leadership of Elder Spencer to find a way to meet the position of Pres. Joseph Smith by falsifying the same before the public, is so in harmony with the spirit and work exhibited by the sworn and unscrupulous enemies of Joseph Smith's father, that a person conversant with the methods of the two parties can hardly help believing that the same old spirit of falsifying and open slanderous accusation which actuated the opposers of the Martyr during his fourteen years of public life which pursued him to his death, is the same one which imbues those who accept it as their pious duty to make a warfare against the public work and life of his son. It is the old story over again, of the professed followers of "Moses," rejecting and misrepresenting the very work that Moses said should be done.

In other societies and in the open warfare against public men

and their policies, the honorable and just rule is, to let the parties speak for themselves, and if they deserve condemnation, let it be "out of their own mouths," or acknowledged utterances; but in the instance of Joseph Smith the Martyr by his enemies, and in that of President Joseph Smith of the Reorganized Church by his enemies, all just and honorable means of opposition to their claims are ignored as useless, and the old crafty spirit that found entrance to its work in the garden of Eden through falsehood and deception, rears its head against these men and attacks them; not for what they have said or done, either in public or private, but upon the ground of the perversions that these enemies have conjured up, and which the parties themselves did not say nor believe.

Such unholy, unmanly, and despicable methods need not deceive any honest, candid searcher after the truth, whether man or

woman, if they will but stop and think. Joseph Smith is a free, independent, American citizen, capable of stating for himself what are his principles and faith, and is upon record both in his public discourses and his numerous publications through the press; and the infamous position that some interviewer has come along and after a conversation with him has succeeded in more properly representing him than he could represent himself, is so absurd and ridiculous that no person can be gulled by it, unless they have an unholy alliance with the perverter of the truth, and greedily deceive themselves in order to sustain a degenerate cause.

The only surprises in this dishonorable attempt are in the fact that any person ever claiming any connection and belief with the Latter Day Saints, who have suffered and endured so much evil by reason of just such methods as employed by Spencer and

Company, could be found stooping to the use of such weapons of Satan, and that any newspaper not given over to the destruction by foul and unscrupulous means of the "marvelous work and a wonder" introduced into the world by Joseph Smith, could have been found to publish such absurd and ridiculous work.

It is evident from the unfair and erroneous positions assumed by Spencer and Company that the accuser of the brethren is still trying to get in his work, and Elder Luff has done another good thing for the cause of truth by turning on the additional light.

E. L. KELLEY.

September 5, 1898.