

how it was that he could see the sides of the planks so as not to step off at the sides, but could not see the end—could not see where the one was missing. Somehow they fail to consider the depth of the Mississippi river, and the steamboats and the rapids, the floodwood, rafts, ties and various other things. What a pity that he could not have erected foot bridges every few miles across the Mississippi river. While this story is only one of the many, yet if people would only apply a little reason they would easily detect their origin and need not be deceived by any of them. Those who circulate such stories exhibit their ignorance of the teaching of Joseph Smith, for he taught that miracles were not to make believers. He could have had no object in view in attempting such a thing, nor did he either.

I am also acquainted with many of Joseph Smith's relatives, and though I am of a criticizing nature I must say I never met more noble men and women. If you reflect you will not remember having seen or heard any story damaging to their characters as christian men and women. I cannot say what may yet come after they die. How is it then that he could be so very bad and they are not? Are none of them "chips off the old block?" How could they all believe implicitly in the work of their predecessor and not be mean, if he was such? Let us bring our reason to bear on these questions as well as the others. Not one of his family emigrated to Utah, nor accepted Brigham Young as a leader. Nor did they ever accept the faith advocated in Utah. The doctrine of Brigham Young differed from that advocated by Joseph Smith as widely as could be. There is no point where the two systems of faith exactly agree, and in many places they are as wide apart as the antipodes. So we ask you to put Utah Mormonism out of your minds when considering this subject, for Joseph Smith had nothing whatever to do with it. After Joseph's death Brigham and about one-third of the church left the states, and in a few years so altered their faith that the courts of Ohio and Missouri would not give them title to the original church property. Before Joseph Smith's death he prophesied many times that if Brigham Young ever led the church he would lead it to hell. If I can see aright, many of those who went with him have been facing in that direction for a number of years.

I next introduce the proof that Joseph Smith was a good, well behaved, christian man, and that the church over which he presided did not endorse polygamy, blood atonement, robbery, lying or theft. Nor was Joseph Smith guilty of such things. The first proof is the decision of Hon. Judge L. S.

Sherman, in Court of Common Pleas, Lake County, Ohio, as found in the Journal Entry, February term, 1880. "The court do find as matters of fact * * * that the church in Utah, the defendant, of which John Taylor is president [John Taylor was Brigham Young's successor], has materially and largely departed from the faith, doctrines, laws, ordinances and usages of said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and has incorporated into its system of faith the doctrine of 'celestial' marriage and a plurality of wives, and the doctrine of Adam-God worship, contrary to the laws and constitution of said original church.

"And the court do further find that the plaintiff, the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, is the true and lawful continuation of, and successors to, the said original Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized in 1830, and is entitled in law to all its rights and property."

Court decisions are worth more than rumors, even though they might be printed in histories and encyclopedias, and in this case proves that the church over which Joseph Smith presided did not endorse polygamy. How then could they have endorsed him if he were a polygamist? As a matter of fact he was not a polygamist in either theory or practice. The bishop of the true Latter-day Saint church a few years ago offered one hundred dollars in gold to any man who would produce a word or sentence either written or spoken by Joseph Smith that in any way endorsed polygamy. But as yet the money has not been called for. Even the Utah folks dare not attempt it. Judge Sherman's decision shows that polygamy was introduced into the Utah system and not into the church over which Joseph presided.

Let us next hear the decision of Judge Phillips, one of the Supreme judges for the western district of Missouri. In speaking of polygamy he says, "Its first appearance as a dogma of the church was in the Utah church in 1852." Further in the decision he says, "It is charged by the Respondents, as an echo of the Utah church, that Joseph Smith, the martyr, secretly taught and practiced polygamy, and the Utah contingent furnishes the evidence, and two of the women to prove this fact. It perhaps would be uncharitable to say of these women that they have borne false testimony as to their connection with Joseph Smith, but in view of all the evidences and circumstances surrounding the alleged intercourse, it is difficult to escape the conclusion that at most they were but sports in nest hiding. In view of the contention of the Salt Lake party, that polygamy obtained,