

to walk. I hope that it may be not only my helm and guide, but yours also, through all the labyrinths and windings of this mortal life, until we attain a standing upon ground celestial.

I have heard it remarked sometimes, by individuals who were not identified or connected with our Church, that if they could only be convinced that polygamy was true, they would become “Mormons” at once.

Do you believe the Bible? “Certainly I do,” says the inquirer. Did father Abraham and the ancient Patriarchs live in this relation, and practice this doctrine? You say they did. Then if what they practiced is true, you are bound to become a “Mormon,” upon your own hypothesis and reasons. But, gentlemen, if I knew that that was the all-convincing argument, and if that was the principal doctrine that alone influenced you to become a “Mormon,” I should at once say, let me never baptize such a person, let me never be the agent to bring such a person into the Church and kingdom of God.

God despises every character who would enter His Church for no other purpose than to criminally indulge his natural propensities. Then, gentlemen, do not indulge the expectation, if you should be convinced by the arguments. I may adduce in favor of the doctrine of polygamy, as it is called, that that will prove a sufficient groundwork for your faith. But where is the ground upon which to base your faith? Where shall you go to find out “Mormonism” from the foundation to the topstone, from the root to the uttermost branch in the tree? Begin at the beginning. If men wish to accomplish any work, they must begin at the beginning of that work, not in the middle of it, or at the end. I must begin at the beginning, and if I know that the first stone is laid upon a permanent foundation, I can then

with safety add another to that already laid; but if I cannot lay the first stone upon ground that is solid—if I cannot lay it upon a rock, I may despair of ever rearing a fabric or superstructure that will resist the rain and winds that may be hurled against it by the power of nature. We must begin at the beginning, and not content ourselves by grasping at that which may be beautiful in illustration and enlist our attention, and begin to build upon it as a foundation. In such a case we may have branches, but we do not bear the root.

I know that this doctrine is made the subject of a great deal of ridicule. I know that the world at large who profess to be pious, or, if not pious, morally upright, look upon it as a damning sin, as a stain upon the bright escutcheon of their country, here in the very heart of the United States territory, surrounded by tall mountains; they consider it a dark spot in the country’s history. Many of the great politicians of the day view it in this point of light. Religionists are still more scrupulous—they regard it as a heinous and damning sin.

I always consider it my duty, under proper circumstances, to give a reason of the hope that is in me, with meekness and fear; and if I have imbibed a principle, and am unable to defend it upon the principles of truth, justice, equity, and true philosophy, I should consider I was walking in the dark.

Whenever truth is manifested by revelation to the servants of God, it never comes without a reason for it. When the light of revelation bursts upon the mind, it not only unfolds one principle, but many. For instance, to illustrate this idea, suppose this room were in total darkness, and we were seated as we now are, if a brilliant light were introduced in the midst of the room, it would enable us to see not only one person, but the whole multitude.