

and do understand, one whom we can see and comprehend, whose life and conduct we are familiar with, and, unless faults are made manifest that we have a privilege of exposing in that individual, it will destroy our faith and confidence, and weaken us more than it will to speak against a being that we know nothing of. This is reasonable, and is according to good sound logic, sense, and argument.

It is folly in the extreme for persons to say that they love God, when they do not love their brethren; and it is of no use for them to say that they have confidence in God, when they have none in righteous men, for they do not know anything about God. It is reasonable for the Elders of Israel to be very sanguine and strenuous on this point. And were I to be asked whether I have any experience in this matter, I can tell the people that once in my life I felt a want of confidence in brother Joseph Smith, soon after I became acquainted with him. It was not concerning religious matters—it was not about his revelations—but it was in relation to his financiering—to his managing the temporal affairs which he undertook. A feeling came ever me that Joseph was not right in his financial management, though I presume the feeling did not last sixty seconds, and perhaps not thirty. But that feeling came on me once and once only, from the time I first knew him to the day of his death. It gave me sorrow of heart, and I clearly saw and understood, by the spirit of revelation manifested to me, that if I was to harbor a thought in my heart that Joseph could be wrong in anything, I would begin to lose confidence in him, and that feeling would grow from step to step, and from one degree to another, until at last I would have the same lack of confidence in his being the mouthpiece for the Almighty, and I would be left, as brother Hooper observed,

upon the brink of the precipice, ready to plunge into what we may call the gulf of infidelity, ready to believe neither in God nor His servants, and to say that there is no God, or, if there is, we do not know anything about Him; that we are here, and by and by shall go from here, and that is all we shall know. Such persons are like those whom the Apostle calls "As natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed." Though I admitted in my feelings and knew all the time that Joseph was a human being and subject to err, still it was none of my business to look after his faults.

I repented of my unbelief, and that too, very suddenly; I repented about as quickly as I committed the error. It was not for me to question whether Joseph was dictated by the Lord at all times and under all circumstances or not. I never had the feeling for one moment, to believe that any man or set of men or beings upon the face of the whole earth had anything to do with him, for he was superior to them all, and held the keys of salvation over them. Had I not thoroughly understood this and believed it, I much doubt whether I should ever have embraced what is called "Mormonism." He was called of God; God dictated him, and if He had a mind to leave him to himself and let him commit an error, that was no business of mine. And it was not for me to question it, if the Lord was disposed to let Joseph lead the people astray, for He had called him and instructed him to gather Israel and restore the Priesthood and kingdom to them.

It was not my prerogative to call him in question with regard to any act of his life. He was God's servant, and not mine. He did not belong to the people but to the Lord, and was doing the work of the Lord, and if He should suffer him to lead the peo-