

us as men of Israel, as “Mormons,” if you please, that we were violators or had been, violators of the law of the land until July, 1862. It was never proven and cannot now be shown that we, as a people were violators of any law of the land whatever. In 1862, a law was enacted against bigamy, or polygamy. The term bigamy had always been used before, but now it was coupled with polygamy in order that it might be made to reach, and be understood by everybody as intended for, the Latter-day Saints.

Now, then, to come at the matter in question, what is the crime, if any there is, in this doctrine of heavenly marriage as we hold it, the doctrine of the eternal covenant of marriage, incident to which is plurality of wives? When we married our wives at the first—we were New Englanders, Britons, Scandinavians, etc.—we were married until death should us part. That was the period for which we made contract, whether we went into the church and had the ordinance solemnized by an ecclesiastic, or whether it was done before a justice of the peace, judge, or any civil magistrate. When the law of God came, before the doctrine of the eternity and plurality of marriage was taught to us, the Lord gave us a revelation, in a very early day, in regard to members of other churches being rebaptized. Some of them doubted the need of being rebaptized. They said we were baptized into the Baptist church; we were sprinkled in the Methodist church, in the Presbyterian, in the Congregational: why be baptized again? The Lord in answer to this question told His people that all old covenants He had caused to be done away; but “Behold!” He said, “I give unto you a new and everlasting cove-

nant.” Therefore, all had to go forth, who had been baptized by men having no authority to administer, and be baptized by one who had authority, in the name of Jesus, for the forgiveness of sins, and for admission into the Church of Christ. By and by, when we had walked before the Lord for a number of years, He revealed to us the laws of marriage. Well-regulated parents do not teach their children when they are dandling them on their laps the nature of the covenant, or the ordinance, or the duties of marriage. They wait until they grow up. It is proper that they should wait until their children have attained to years of judgment, understanding, and perhaps to the age of puberty. So the Lord, in dealing with his children did not reveal this eternal covenant of marriage until his people had lived a while in keeping the first laws and ordinances of the Church, and learned to walk in the light of the Holy Spirit, and to purify themselves from the various besetments with which they were attended when they went into the waters of baptism, and become better prepared for more exalted principles and truths. One of the last great principles that the Prophet Joseph was commanded of God to teach us, was the law regulating the eternity of marriage; that whereas, we had taken our wives only until death should us part, we should now understand that we were, while in the flesh, laying the foundation for eternal dominions, crowns and exaltations; that our wives and our children were given to us of God for the purpose of laying the foundation of a kingdom; that we shall have, if we are faithful and obedient, the covenant of eternal life ourselves and the power to seal the same upon our generations, that they