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A Comparative Study and Evaluation of the Latter-Day Saint and "Fundamentalist" Views Pertaining to the Practice of Plural Marriage

Dean C. Jessee
Brigham Young University - Provo

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A COMPARATIVE STUDY AND EVALUATION OF THE LATTER-DAY SAINT
AND "FUNDAMENTALIST" VIEWS PERTAINING TO THE PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE.

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE
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by

DEAN C. JESSEE

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This thesis by Dean C. Jessee is accepted in its present form by the College of Religion of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

Date

Thesis Committee:

Chairman

Member
Although the practice of plural marriage was officially discontinued by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1890, small groups of dissenters claim authority to continue the practice today. Except for repeated official announcements of the Church that authority to contract such marriages has definitely ceased, and the assertions of "Fundamentalist" groups to the contrary, no effort has been made to present and clarify the issue from a theological standpoint. This study seeks to evaluate and compare the "Fundamentalist" claims of authority to practice plural marriage with the history and doctrine of the Latter-day Saint Church.

Many persons have been directly instrumental in the completion of this study. I am deeply indebted to the assistance of my wife, June, without whose support and encouragement this work would never have been completed. To Dr. Russell R. Rich, Dr. Sidney B. Sperry, President William E. Berrett, and Mrs. Nan O. Grass, who have kindly read and constructively criticized the manuscript of this thesis, I am most grateful. My special appreciation goes to Mr. Karl C. Boss whose assiduous efforts as typist were invaluable in transcribing this work into a readable form. Many others who go unnamed have played a definite part in the accomplishment of this thesis.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I. INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II. THE SUCCESSION OF AUTHORITY FROM JOSEPH SMITH--</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE &quot;FUNDAMENTALIST&quot; VIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The &quot;Musser&quot; group</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III. THE SUCCESSION OF AUTHORITY FROM JOSEPH SMITH--</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. THE SUCCESSION OF AUTHORITY FROM JOSEPH SMITH--</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN EVALUATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. THE PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE--</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE &quot;FUNDAMENTALIST&quot; VIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VI. THE PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE--</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VII. THE PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE--AN EVALUATION.</td>
<td>144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VIII. THE MANIFESTO--THE &quot;FUNDAMENTALIST&quot; VIEW.</td>
<td>159</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IX. THE MANIFESTO--THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW.</td>
<td>170</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>X. THE MANIFESTO--AN EVALUATION.</td>
<td>210</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XI. PLURAL MARRIAGE SINCE THE MANIFESTO--</td>
<td>223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE &quot;FUNDAMENTALIST&quot; VIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XII. PLURAL MARRIAGE SINCE THE MANIFESTO--</td>
<td>229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIII. PLURAL MARRIAGE SINCE THE MANIFESTO--AN EVALUATION.</td>
<td>255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>XIV. CONCLUSION</td>
<td>266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SELECTED REFERENCES</td>
<td>269</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The practice of plural marriage, which had been assiduously defended and practiced by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for nearly a half century, was officially terminated on September 25, 1890, when President Wilford Woodruff issued his now famous "Manifesto" advising the Saints to "refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land." The practice of polygamy, which had begun under the direction of the Prophet Joseph Smith and which was officially announced as a tenet of the Church in 1852, was unanimously accepted by the Latter-day Saints as a command from God. So great was their conviction of its divine origin that for many years after the doctrine was officially announced, it was zealously defended in the face of a relentless political and religious campaign to stamp it out. Although the struggle was intense, for some of the Saints a relinquishment of the practice was unthinkable. Consequently, when Wilford Woodruff announced the suspension of the practice in 1890, his action was received with disappointment by some of the Saints. And although the Church in general was convinced that the suspension of plural marriage was accomplished by the same power that had introduced it, a few were determined to continue the practice irrespective of the consequences.

Despite ecclesiastical and civil sanctions against it, the
practice of polygamy is advocated to this day by small coteries of zealots dedicated to a belief that the action of the Church in 1890 was not universally applicable. More specifically, their contention rests upon the following premises:

(A) A special dispensation of priesthood authority operating independent of the Latter-day Saint Church has been perpetuated from Joseph Smith to the present day, by which sanction of the practice of plural marriage has continued.

(B) Since the practice of plural marriage is an irrevocable law of the Gospel and essential to the highest exaltation in the world to come, authorization for its continued practice was guaranteed in 1886 when a select group of individuals were chosen to continue the principle independent of the Church.

(C) Resulting from a policy of compromise, and dictated at the behest of a few non-Mormon territorial officials, the Manifesto was advocated as a revelation from God only after a spirit of rebellion arose among the members of the Church following its issuance.

(D) At the time of the issuance of the Manifesto, it was tacitly understood by the Church leaders that legislation favorable to a resumption of the practice of plural marriage would be introduced following statehood. However, after the turn of the century, this policy was abandoned and the Church undertook a campaign to eradicate from its society those who continued to foster the fundamental tenets of Mormonism.

It is the purpose of this study to investigate the foregoing contentions that the validity of the arguments for or against the practice of plural marriage today may be determined.
The "Fundamentalists," as the advocates of the foregoing position are called, claim to be the perpetuators of the original deposit of Mormonism--inferring thereby that the Church has departed from its original teachings.

This study will therefore proceed with a comparison of the "Fundamentalist" position as outlined above with the history and doctrine of the Latter-day Saint Church. In this, a certain knowledge of Mormonism has been presupposed.

Although the scope of this thesis of necessity has been limited to a consideration of the two main "Fundamentalist" factions, the "Musser group" and the Church of the Firstborn, it should be noted that all present-day factions of the Latter-day Saint Church advocating polygamy are basically united.

In this thesis, the terms The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, The Church, and the LDS Church, have been used synonymously. Members of the Church have been designated as such, or as Latter-day Saints, or Saints. Except where designated otherwise, the name "Fundamentalists" has been used as a general term denoting those individuals or groups which assert authority through Joseph Smith to foster the practice of plural marriage today independent of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Other terms have been defined as the need arose.

Considered under the headings: The Succession of Authority from Joseph Smith, The Practice of Plural Marriage, The Manifesto, and The Practice of Plural Marriage after the Manifesto, the four basic premises of the "Fundamentalist" position as listed above have been compared with the Latter-day Saint doctrine and history in order
to determine the truthfulness or falsity of the claims for the practice of plural marriage today. In each case a chapter has been devoted to the "Fundamentalist" position, followed by the Latter-day Saint view, and an evaluation.
CHAPTER II

THE SUCCESSION OF AUTHORITY FROM JOSEPH SMITH—
THE "FUNDAMENTALIST" VIEW

Unfortunately a strong tradition has grown up among the Saints placing the Church as the highest organization—the ultimate in power and authority in the earth. Under this tradition the President of the Church in all instances is presumed also to be the President of Priesthood, thus automatically becoming God's mouthpiece on earth. But this claim is unsound and in the light of facts and scripture cannot be maintained . . . .

Although originally united in their efforts against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, advocates of polygamy in Utah today have become divided on the subject of the succession of authority into two significant factions: the "Musser Group," and the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times.

The "Musser" group

According to the "Musser" group of "Fundamentalists" the work of the Lord on the earth is carried out under the direction of three distinct organizations: First, The Priesthood, which is defined as the power of God on earth, and which is vested in a "... definite body of Presiding High Priests." Second, The Kingdom of God, which is one of the two appendages of the Priesthood; "... the channel through

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which the power and authority of God functions in managing the earth
and the inhabitants thereof in things political." And third, The
Church, which is the other appendage, "... being the propaganda
division of the Priesthood... having only ecclesiastical juris-
diction over its members."¹

The Priesthood, it is claimed, is divided into two groups:
"... a large group properly called and properly ordained, and a
small group not only so called and ordained, but also chosen." The
Priesthood authority of the small, "chosen" group is delegated by God
Himself and "... has original jurisdiction on earth." This group
functions independent of the Church. The large group receives its
authority from, and is subordinate to, the small group.²

The higher segment of the Priesthood comprising the "chosen"

... was anciently known as the Sanhedrin, and comprised
seventy-one Elders,—seventy in the Council proper—whom God
had Moses call together, and upon whom the Lord placed
the spirit and calling of Moses, giving them equal authority with
Moses, except as to that of Presidency, Moses being the senior
in ordination, necessarily became the presiding President of
the group.

It must be borne in mind that the order of Priesthood which
Moses held was that which enabled him to look upon the face of
God and to talk with him (See D&C 84:21-23), and it was this
order of the Priesthood, which must be conferred direct from
God, that the seventy elders were endowed with.³

Although part of the Priesthood functioned within the church
until the time of John the Baptist, continue the "Nasser" group,
"... the greater or Melchizedek Priesthood functioned out of the
Church and entirely independent of it, with such Prophets as Ezekiel,

²Ibid., pp. 164-65, 167.
³Ibid., p. 165.
Issiah, Jeremiah, Daniel and others.1

After the death of Christ and the Apostles, this ancient order of Priesthood allegedly continued in an apostate form as the College of Cardinals in the Roman Catholic church.

This higher order of priesthood was restored at the beginning of the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times, claim the "Musser" group, when, in June, 1829, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Priesthood from Peter, James, and John. They purportedly received "... not only the Priesthood of Melchizedek, but the order of Priesthood that comprehends all power..." 2 That such a restoration took place is seen from a revelation to Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, in June, 1829, in which the Lord said: "... I speak unto you, even as unto Paul mine apostle, for you are called even with that same calling with which he was called."3 According to the "Musser" group, the significant thing to note here is that this revelation was given a year before the organization of the Church and some six years before the quorum of Twelve was organized. "... Certainly the organizing power is greater than that which is organized. The builder of a house is greater than the house. The Priesthood may organize and disorganize at the will of God, and the Church is one of its creatures."4

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1"Priesthood Matters," Truth, October 1, 1936, p. 75.


4A Priesthood Issue, p. 4.
It is asserted that when the Church was organized on April 6, 1830, Joseph Smith, as President of the High Priesthood, intrusted to it only that authority necessary for it to carry out its mission. He "... did not at any time endow the Church with a fulness of Priesthood authority. He gave the Church only such portion of Priesthood authority as it could absorb and properly handle." 1 Actually, the Priesthood could have continued without the Church, but "... the time came when additional organization was needed. The Priesthood, all powerful as it was, needed tools to work with; in this situation it proceeded to organize the Church ... and later ... the Kingdom." 2

According to the "Nusser" group of "Fundamentalists," the perpetuation of the High Priesthood from the time of Joseph Smith to the present day may be traced by citing a few incidents in church history:

When the revelation recorded as the Eighty-fourth section of the Doctrine and Covenants was given in September, 1832, the Lord told Joseph Smith and the six elders mentioned therein that they had received the same high priesthood that had been held by Moses. To these men, the Lord further said, "... you are mine apostles, even God's High Priests; ye are they whom my Father hath given me--ye are my friends ... ." 3 (Section 84:63) It is essential to note that these men were designated as "High Priest Apostles" upon this occasion--and this, three years before the Quorum of Twelve was selected in the Church. It is argued that the authority conferred here, "... doubt-

1"Priesthood Matters," Truth, October 1, 1936, p. 74.
less had reference to the same apostolic calling that Joseph, Oliver, and David previously received. . . ."1 These men constituted the presiding body of the High Priesthood and are referred to in Church history as "Friends," "Council of the Presidency," "Presidency of the High Priesthood," etc. They had

. . . doubtless been chosen some time previous to the date of the revelation mentioned, but had been held in a state of probation, or training, preparatory to receiving the special endowment mentioned in verse 42; and this special calling or endowment was something separate and apart from any Church function, it being a Priesthood calling entirely independent of the Church.2

When the Quorum of Twelve was organized in 1835, continues the argument of the "Musser" group, neither Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, nor David Whitmer became members of that quorum, "... their order of priesthood doubtless placing them above that of the members of the Quorum of Twelve--the Quorum being an appendage to the Priesthood proper."3 Although Joseph, Oliver, and David had been ordained "... Apostles of Jesus Christ (D&C 18:9; 20:2,3), and are referred to in numerous revelations as 'Apostles,' the Lord designated the Twelve to be chosen by Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer (18:27) as 'disciples.' They were referred to as 'The Twelve traveling Council' (124:127), 'the Twelve,' etc. (112:14,30) . . . ."4 From this, it is reasoned, "... there is a difference in the Apostolic calling of Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer . . . and the apostolic calling of the 'Twelve Apostles' and the 'Seventy Apostles' which were made a part of the Church machinery . . . ."5 When the Quorum of Twelve

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2Tbid. 3Tbid., p. 167. 4Tbid., pp. 167-68. 5Tbid. p. 168.
was organized in the Church in 1835, the keys of the higher Apostle-
ship were not bestowed upon them. "Neither the Twelve, nor any member
thereof, as such, then, or at any time since held those keys except in
a restricted and delegated sense . . . . ."

Further evidence that the Apostleship of Joseph, Oliver, and
David was of a higher order than that conferred upon the Church is
deduced from the fact that although the First Presidency of the Church
had been organized in March, 1833, yet it was "... those of the
apostleship of Joseph, Oliver, and David," that chose the Twelve in
1835. "To suppose that these men," continues the "Musser" group,
"(David and Oliver) did the choosing (as indicated in some of the
writings of the brethren, because of having been witnesses of the
Book of Mormon), is an error—an supposition that is without rhyme,
rhythm, or reason."2

It is further asserted that in a revelation given to the
Prophet Joseph Smith on June 22, 1834, the Lord expressed His dis-
pleasure over the transgression of his people in Missouri. Among other
things, He said

Behold, I say unto you, were it not for the transgressions of
my people, speaking concerning the church and not individuals,
they might have been redeemed even now.

I speak not concerning those who are appointed to lead my
people, who are the first elders of my church, for they are not
all under this condemnation.3

According to the "Musser" group, the "First Elders" here re-
ferred to, "... doubtless had reference to the group of 'Friends'
referred to in Section 61, ... who had been specially endowed with

1Tbid. p. 167. 2Tbid. 3Doctrine and Covenants, 105:2,7.
that order of the Priesthood that constituted them 'the Sons of Moses and of Aaron, and the seed of Abraham, and the Church and Kingdom and the elect of God' . . . ."¹

In his journal under the date of February 27, 1835, the Prophet Joseph Smith records: "This evening, nine of the twelve [naming them] . . . assembled at the house of President Joseph Smith, Jun., who was present, with Frederick G. Williams, Sidney Rigdon, Bishop Whitney and Three elders . . . ."² Although the seven men who met with nine of the Twelve are not specifically referred to as the "First Elders," yet, it is contended, "... they doubtless comprised this group, possessing jurisdiction over the Twelve whom they had met to instruct."³

On October 5, 1835, the Prophet notes:

I returned home, being much fatigued from riding in the rain . . . and in the evening attended a Council of the Twelve Apostles . . . told them that it was the will of God they should take their families to Missouri next season; also this fall to attend the solemn assembly of the first Elders, for the organization of the School of the Prophets . . . ."⁴

Although the record does not specifically say so, the "first Elders" mentioned here "... doubtless constituted . . . the 'Presidency of the High Priesthood.'"⁵

¹"Items on Priesthood," Truth, November, 1951, p. 171.

²Joseph Smith, Jr., History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1949, II, 195. (Hereafter referred to as Documentary History of the Church.)


⁴Documentary History of The Church, II, 287.

⁵"Items on Priesthood," op. cit., p. 173.
When the "solemn assembly" met in March, 1836, they

... proceeded to wash one another's feet. President Sidney Rigdon first washed President Joseph Smith, Junior's feet, and then, in turn, was washed by him; after which President Rigdon washed President Joseph Smith, Sen., and Hyrum Smith. President Joseph Smith, Jun., washed President Frederick G. Williams, and then President Hyrum Smith washed President David Whitmer's and President Oliver Cowdery's feet. Then President David Whitmer washed President William W. Phelps' feet, and in turn President Phelps washed President John Whitmer's feet. The Bishops and their counselors were then washed, after which we partook of the bread and wine ... .

The following day "... the Presidency proceeded to wash the feet of the Twelve ... and then the Twelve proceeded to wash the feet of the Presidents of the several quorums ... ." From this account, the "Mussar" group deduces the following facts:

1st. That the nine brethren who performed the ordinance of feet washing as indicated, were none of them members of the Quorum of Twelve. They were doubtless the 'First Elders,' a Priesthood group working entirely separate and apart from the Church and independent of it, and with whom the Twelve were to meet in 'solemn assembly'; and, being the 'First Elders,' and consequently higher in the order of Priesthood than the Twelve, the ordinance was performed first in their behalf.

2nd. That each of the eight brethren embracing the 'First Elders' was designated by the Prophet as 'President,' which title is strictly in keeping with their high calling of Presiding High Priests, each of the group being a 'President.'

3rd. That following the ceremony performed in behalf of themselves, this group of 'First Elders' proceeded to attend to the same in behalf of the Bishops and their counselors, they holding the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood independent of the Church; and that following the Bishops, and on the next day, the ordinance was performed for the Twelve, whose calling, as we have shown, was to an appendage ambassadorial office.

On May 4, 1842, Joseph Smith met in his office above his store in Nauvoo in council with James Adams, Hyrum Smith, Newel K. Whitney,

1Documentary History of the Church, II, 430.  2Ibid.

George Miller, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards

"... instructing them in the principles and order of the Priesthood, attending to washings, anointings, endowments and the communication of keys pertaining to the Aaronic Priesthood, and so on to the highest order of the Melchizedek Priesthood . . . ."¹ This council, reasons the "Musser" group, "... is doubtless the same official group mentioned previously . . . ."²

A year later, on May 26, 1843, the Prophet again met in council with Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, James Adams, Newel K. Whitney and William Lew, giving them their endowments and instructions in the priesthood. He gave them "... the keys of the priesthood, the same that he himself held; and whatever might happen to him there were others now who had the authority to step forth and build up the kingdom of God on the earth and to perform all the ordinances thereof."³

According to the "Musser" group of Fundamentalists," the fact that the personnel attending the council meetings of May 4, 1842, and May 26, 1843, with two exceptions are identical is significant; for it shows that although they held differing church offices, yet they "... were co-equal in the Priesthood, the only distinction being that of seniority in ordination,—speaking broadly, they holding jointly the keys of the Priesthood, and this independent of the Church and without limitation of office . . . ."⁴

¹Documentary History of the Church, V, 1.
²"Items on Priesthood," op. cit., p. 175.
³Documentary History of the Church, V, 409.
At the conference of the Church held on September 3, 1837, Joseph Smith and his two counselors: Frederick G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon, were sustained as the First Presidency of the Church. During the conference the Prophet introduced Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith, Sr., Hyrum Smith and John Smith as assistant counselors. Since the First Presidency of the Church consists of only three presiding High Priests, (D&C 107:22), it is reasoned that

... the choosing of four extra counselors—the seven to constitute the 'heads of the Church'—must be considered in a broader light than merely adding extra help to the appendage office of First Presidency. Joseph would hardly commit the error of going contrary to the revelation given of the Lord to himself, specifically designating the number that was to constitute this Church position. And here again, it must be observed, Joseph is seen in dual capacities. He was not only President of the Church—an appendage office having a delegated authority and with two counselors—but he was also the presiding officer over the group that constituted the Presidency of the Priesthood...

That this high priesthood council was perpetuated after the death of Joseph Smith is inferred from the fact that at the general Conference of the Church in April, 1873, Brigham Young announced his choice of five additional counselors: Lorenzo Snow, Brigham Young, Jr., Albert Carrington, John W. Young, and George Q. Cannon. Again quoting the spokesmen of the Musser "Fundamentalists":

... Since... only three could constitute the First Presidency of the Church, the 'privilege of having seven brethren to assist him in this capacity,' undoubtedly referred to some other 'capacity' than that of the First Presidency. Brigham Young, like Joseph Smith, was occupied in a dual capacity; he not only presided over the Church as its President, but also presided over the Priesthood of God, and the seven counselors were to assist him in this latter office.

If the men comprising the councils of the "High Priesthood" as

1Tbid., p. 174. 2Tbid.
reviewed in the above instances, are not the same in each case, the reason for this, according to the "Musser" group, is that the members thereof

... were augmented in numbers from time to time as men proved worthy and were designated by the Lord for this high calling. Doubtless, it was God's plan, had the Saints remained faithful to their covenants, to select a total of seventy-two Elders, and fully establish the ancient order of Sanhedrin, which purpose, however, was defeated because of the weakness of the Saints and of their transgressions.¹

Continuing the claims of the Musser "Fundamentalists," a presiding council of the High Priesthood, comprising seven men, jointly hold the keys of authority independent of the Church. The senior member, by ordination, is purported to be the "one man" (D&C 132:7) who "possesses the Keys to the Priesthood, including, of course, the sealing ordinances..."² In the case of the death of the President of this council, it is asserted that the keys automatically revert to the next in seniority. For example, in the meeting referred to above, held on May 26, 1843,³ the Prophet Joseph... placed Hyrum next to himself, Brigham Young following, and being next to Hyrum in order of seniority. Joseph intended that Hyrum should succeed him in the Presidency as well as in holding the keys to the Priesthood...⁴ However, the death of Joseph and Hyrum left Brigham Young to become the Presiding High Priest, not by reason of his having been President of the Quorum of the Twelve, but because of his seniority in ordination in the high Priesthood.⁵

Following Brigham Young, it is asserted that John Taylor and


Wilford Woodruff "... each became the President of Priesthood by reason of his seniority in the higher order of the Priesthood ..."¹ According to the "Musser" group, the tradition that the President of the Church is the highest authority on earth "... has resulted from the fact that Brigham Young, John Taylor, and Wilford Woodruff, who in their respective days each became the President of Priesthood ... also in his turn (became) President of the Church ..."² Although each of these men held dual positions, it should be remembered that the Presidency of the Church "was ever subordinate" to the Priesthood.³

On the subject of seniority, the "Musser" group contends that although the Twelve Apostles in the Church labor under the direction of the First Presidency, the latter is not the highest position in the Church. "The Patriarch is at the head of the Church—the father of it. He holds the sealing blessings pertaining to it. When things are in order, he presides over the President of the Church, being higher in Priesthood authority."⁴ This is allegedly supported by the statement of the Lord to Joseph Smith: "First, I give unto you Hyrum Smith, to be a Patriarch unto you to hold the sealing blessings OF MY CHURCH, even the Holy Spirit of promise, whereby ye are sealed up unto the day of redemption ..."⁵ The subordinate position of the First Presidency to the Patriarch is emphasized from the next verse: "I give unto you, my servant Joseph, to be a presiding elder over all

¹A Priesthood Issue, p. 4. ²Ibid. ³Ibid.
⁵Doctrine and Covenants, 121:124, as quoted in A Priesthood Issue, p. 7.
my church, to be a translator, a revelator, a seer, and prophet."
From this it is concluded that "... Hyrum was ahead of Joseph (in
the Church), but, however, being subordinate to Joseph in the
Priesthood." Consequently, asserts the "Musser" group, "... the
belief that the President of the Twelve ... succeeds to the position
of the President of the Church, when the Quorum of First Presidency
becomes dissolved through the death of its head ... is an error.
When the "House of God" is in order the President of Priesthood will
preside over the Church." Thus, the duty of choosing a successor
to the President of the Church purportedly devolves upon the Patriarch,
who acts under the direction of the Presidency of the High Priesthood.

According to the Musser "Fundamentalists," the government of
the High Priesthood is that of a theocracy, while that of the Church
is a theo-Democracy:

... Under the former, God's rule is absolute: 'Wherefore
I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good;' (D&C
56:4) In the latter, the element of common consent enters: 'And
all things shall be done by common consent in the Church, by
much prayer and faith, for all things you shall receive by
faith.' (D&C 26:2)

The Lord gave commandments through the Priesthood and those
commandments were binding upon the Priesthood from the moment
they were given. However, they were not binding upon the Church,
as an organization, until accepted by it, or given a chance to
accept it.

Such was allegedly the case with the law of plural marriage,
which was given as a commandment to the High Priesthood as early as

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1 *Doctrine and Covenants*, 124:125.
4 "Does the Church Control the Priesthood?" *Truth*, November,
1931, but which was not presented to the Church until 1852, at which time it was accepted by the vote of the Saints in a special conference in Salt Lake City.

However, continues the "Musser" group:

... ten years had not elapsed before many of them (the Church members) were urging the suspension or abrogation of the law ... Hostility ... increased until ... in 1890 the Saints almost unanimously voted to suspend the 'Law of the Priesthood' by adopting the Woodruff Manifesto. Almost to a man the Saints apostatized from this great law of marriage ... 1

Since the adoption of the Manifesto, it is further claimed, the momentum of apostasy has increased, "... until today the teachings of the Church have too little in common with those of an earlier day." 2

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1"It is Written Apostasy," Ibid., January, 1938, p. 136.

2Ibid., p. 135. In addition to the rejection of the Law of Plural Marriage, further evidence cited by the "Musser" group for the apostasy of the Church is derived from the following facts: The Church has suspended the Law of Consecration and substituted a lesser law for it which includes a Security Plan that has "... little or no resemblance to the order revealed from heaven." (Consult, "Economic Law of Heaven," Truth, November, 1938, pp. 104-05; "United Order," Ibid., January, 1938, p. 144.) Also, it is contended, the Church has made vital changes in the temple ordinance work, especially in relation to the change of the garment to conform with present day fashions. (See "Temple Ordinances," Ibid., January, 1938, pp. 149-50.) The method of conferring the priesthood was changed also, allegedly, from that of first ordaining the candidate to the priesthood and then conferring the office, to that of conferring the office alone, with only that portion of the Priesthood necessary to function in the office. (See "Priesthood," Ibid., pp. 151-52.) The method of missionary work has also purportedly been changed from the commandment of the Lord that "... the Church ... shall preach the gospel without purse or scrip ...", (R & C 84:86) to the method that purse and scrip are necessary. (See "Church Missionary System," Ibid., November, 1938, p. 111.) It is argued that the Church has also obscured the true knowledge of God by asserting that Adam is not the father of the spirits of all mankind who have lived upon the earth, and consequently the God whom we worship. (Consult, Joseph W. Musser, Michael Our Father and Our God, [Salt Lake City: Truth Publishing Company, 1945], 79 pp.) And in general, concludes the "Musser" group, the present trend of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints is to seek friendship with Babylon and is no longer a
Shortly after the issuance of the Manifesto in 1890, continues
the "Mussner" group, the Church undertook to usurp authority over the
High Priesthood by attempting to nullify the priesthood of those who
remained true to the law of plural marriage. It is asserted, however,
that

... when a man is excommunicated from the Church for an in-
fraction of the rules thereof, but remains in harmony with the
laws of God, his Priesthood cannot be disturbed by the Church.
Once a man receives the Priesthood, God only can take it away
from him, and that in accordance with the revelation, D&C 121:37.1

Although the Church rejected the law of plural marriage and
fell into apostasy, the Lord had previously provided for the perpetu-
ation of that principle, when, on September 27, 1886, John Taylor,
"... not as President of the Church, but as President of Priest-
hood ... 2 selected five men and bestowed upon them the "High Priest
Apostleship" that he had received from the Prophet Joseph Smith. He
then allegedly set them apart to perpetuate plural marriages,
"... after the Church should have discontinued them within its juris-
diction ... ."2 The five men purportedly chosen were: John W.
Woolley, Lorin C. Woolley, George Q. Cannon, Charles H. Wilkens, and
Samuel Bateman. Joseph F. Smith, it is asserted, was away on a mission
at the time but was later given this same authority.2 "These six, then,
with Wilford Woodruff ... formed the Priesthood presidency at that

persecuted church but has turned to persecute those who adhere to its
original doctrines. (See "Unstable Friendships," Ibid., June, 1938,
p. 13.)


2For a detailed account see Infra, Chapter 5.
time, with John Taylor the head thereof . . . "1 It is argued that
had John Taylor taken this action as President of the Church, " . . . to
render it legal, the Church would necessarily have had to approve it
by vote . . . as 'all things must be done by common consent in the
Church.' . . . acting, however, in purely a Priesthood capacity, as
President Taylor did, he was within his rights and the Church was not
involved . . . "1

Although Wilford Woodruff succeeded John Taylor as President of
the High Priesthood, continue the "Musser" group, the Manifesto he
issued stopping plural marriages was done in his capacity as President
of the Church, whereas in his Priesthood capacity, he appointed men
and set them apart to perform such marriages independent of the
Church.2 Since the time of Wilford Woodruff " . . . the dual positions
have not been held, the President of Priesthood being separate and
apart from the President of the Church."3

The Musser "Fundamentalists" claim that the Presidency of the
High Priesthood passed by seniority to Lorin Woolley,4 who in turn,
as the last one of the six men chosen by President Taylor in 1886,
called and ordained four other men about 1929 to the presidency of
the High Priesthood. These men were Joseph Leslie Broadbent, John
Yates Barlow, Joseph White Musser, and Charles Frederick Zitting.5

1A Priesthood Issue, p. 25. 2Ibid. 3Ibid., p. 4.

1It is asserted that Lorin Woolley had been ordained to the
Apostleship prior to the delegation of authority in 1886. At the age
of thirteen he " . . . was given his endowments and was ordained an
Apostle by President Brigham Young; and while he was never numbered
with the Quorum of Twelve, he maintained his Apostleship to the end . . . . "
Truth, April, 1951, pp. 319-20.

5From private correspondence in the possession of the author. Only
It is through these men that the alleged authority to practice plural marriage has passed to the present day.

The Musser group of "Fundamentalists" concludes that the above cited incidents in church history "... all tend to show that behind the scenes— independent of the Church — there was a power little understood then, and perhaps by the masses who depend upon others to do their thinking, no better understood to this day, and which is the governing power of heaven, and from which the Church must receive its life and being ... ."¹

If a question arises as to why the existence of this higher order of Priesthood has not been made clearer in the revelations and history of this dispensation, the "Musser" group answers, it is because ". . . the Saints were not prepared to receive the truth. Few are yet thus prepared, but the leaven of truth is working ... ."²

¹A Priesthood Issue, p. 27.


Upon the death of John Y. Barlow on December 29, 1949, Truth records:
"At the time of his passing he was the senior living member of what is known as the Priesthood Council. This Council dates back to the days of Joseph Smith, when, under the direction of the Lord, it was organized in this dispensation. Being of perpetual nature, this Council has continued on down to the present time." Truth, February, 1950, p. 229.
CHART SHOWING THE "FUNDAMENTALIST" CONCEPT OF PRIESTHOOD

ORGANIZATION AND SUCCESSION

Seventy-one members with 7 presidents, the senior member of which is the one man (D&C 132:7) who holds all priesthood authority on earth.

\[\text{THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD}\]

\{Moses\}
\{The Prophets of Israel\}
\{Christ\}
\{Peter\}
\{Joseph Smith, Jr.\}
\{Brigham Young\}
\{John Taylor\}
\{Wilford Woodruff\}
\{Lorenzo Snow\}
\{Joseph F. Smith\}
\{Heber J. Grant\}
\{George Albert Smith\}
\{David O. McKay\}

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

Patriarch

\{Joseph Smith, Sr.\}
\{Hyrum Smith\}
\{John Smith\}
\{John Smith\}
\{Hyrum G. Smith\}
\{Joseph F. Smith\}
\{Eldred Gee Smith\}

First Presidency

\{Joseph Smith Jr.\}
\{Brigham Young\}
\{John Taylor\}
\{Wilford Woodruff\}
\{Lorenzo Snow\}
\{Joseph F. Smith\}
\{Heber J. Grant\}

Council of Fifty

Quorum of Twelve

Quorum of Seventy
The "Church of the Firstborn"

The views presented in the remainder of this Chapter represent the position of the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times, with headquarters in Buenaventura, Chihuahua, Mexico. This organization is united with the "Musser" group and other "Fundamentalists" in Utah and the intermountain west on the subject of polygamy, but there is a marked difference in their claims concerning the succession of authority. Evidence indicates that the establishment of the "Church of the Firstborn" was comparatively recent. From all indications, the leaders of this group were originally affiliated with the "Musser" group in Utah, but since 1955 have propounded their claims on an independent basis.

According to the Church of the Firstborn, the "first grand office of the priesthood," which is over all lesser priesthood authority upon the earth is the "Right of the Firstborn," the possessor of which is authorized to "... stand in the stead of the Firstborn in His absence ... ." He presides over all things pertaining to the Kingdom of God on the earth, coordinating all the different organizations of

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1A recent date for the organization of this movement is suggested from a statement of Floren LeBaron that the name of the Church of the Firstborn, "... was given through Joel [LeBaron], and accepted by Wesley and myself [Floren], and by all others who have become affiliated with the move. Wesley had suggested another name ... 'The Church of the Firstborn of the Patriarchal Era.' But not until after Brother Joel had come forth with the name that was adopted was the matter settled. He was the first one to bring the name up in council." (Floren LeBaron, "An Open Letter to John Butchereit," The Rolling Stone, November, 1956, p. 2.)

As pertaining to the organization of the Church, the following statement is pertinent: "The organization was legalized in Salt Lake City in the month of September, 1955. The principal things, so far, pertaining to the organization, did not transpire until April 3, 1956, about six months later ... ." (Ibid.)
the priesthood in order "... that the people might be prepared to enter the terrestrial state." Without this office the Church of the Firstborn cannot exist upon the earth.1

There are three grand divisions in the Church of the Firstborn, according to its proponents, which are subordinate to the office of the Right of the Firstborn: First, the Office of the Grand Patriarch, which ". . . presides over all the spiritual blessings of the Church in concert with the right of the Firstborn, and which has the authority to perform all the ordinances pertaining to the house of God." Second, the office of the Presiding Bishop, which stands next in authority to the Right of the Firstborn, but presides over that business ". . . pertaining to the temporal concerns of the kingdom of God. . . ." And third, the office of the President of the Kingdom, standing next to the Right of the Firstborn with authority to transact all business pertaining to civil government in the Kingdom of God.2

It is the duty of the Grand Patriarch, continues the argument, to preside over that branch of the Church of the Firstborn called the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The latter, it is asserted, ". . . has in its trust the dispensing of the spiritual blessings, together with the education and preparation of the people of the earth to receive the same. . . ." This branch was organized on April 6, 1830 ". . . under the direction of Joseph Smith, who at the time held

1Ervil M. LeBaron, Priesthood Expounded (Mexican Mission of the Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times, August, 1956), pp. 23, 36. See also, The Priesthood of God and The Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Times (Church of the Firstborn, n.d.), pp. 10, 16, 17. (Hereafter referred to as The Priesthood of God.)

2Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 35. Also, The Priesthood of God, pp. 16-17.
the Patriarchal office.\textsuperscript{1}

Subordinate to the Presiding Patriarch in authority in the Church of Jesus Christ, assert the Church of the Firstborn, is the "Quorum of Three," or First Presidency. This quorum forms a unit "... equal in authority yet subordinate in presidency," to the Presiding Patriarch. It is asserted that the duty of the First Presidency is to "... preside over the instruction and preparation of the people to receive their blessings under the authority of the Presiding Patriarch." Next in authority comes the Quorum of Twelve, which is equal in authority yet subordinate in Presidency to the Quorum of Three. It is maintained that the duty of the Quorum of Twelve is "... to bear off the kingdom to the nations of the earth, gather the people and regulate the affairs of the Church abroad." Next is the Quorum of Seventy, which is subordinate to the Twelve in presidency but equal in authority, and whose function is to assist the Twelve.\textsuperscript{2} This organization constitutes the Church of the Firstborn. "This is the kingdom spoken of in the second chapter of the Book of Daniel," which will eventually revolutionize the whole world.\textsuperscript{3}

This concept of authority is better understood by tracing its history from the beginning:

To the Church of the Firstborn, evidence for the three grand orders of priesthood as defined above, is seen from a statement of the


\textsuperscript{2}\textit{The Priesthood of God}, pp. 23-24. See also, Ervil M. LeBaron, \textit{op. cit.}, pp. 44, 46.

\textsuperscript{3}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 36.
Apostle Paul in his epistle to the Hebrews:

For this Melchizedec [sic], king of Salem, priest of the most high God, who met Abraham returning from the slaughter of the kings, and blessed him; . . . .

Now consider how great this man was, unto whom even the patriarch Abraham gave the tenth of the spoils . . . .

And without all contradiction the less is blessed of the better . . . .

If therefore perfection were by the Levitical priesthood, (for under it the people received the law,) what further need was there that another priest should rise after the order of Melchizedec, and not be called after the order of Aaron? . . . .

Who needeth not daily, as those high priests, to offer up sacrifice, first for his own sins, and then for the people's; for this he did once, when he offered up himself. 1

From this quotation the following facts are deduced:

1st.--That a priest after the order of Melchizedek, in the sense this term is here used, is a man holding the office or authority Melchizedek held.

2nd.--That a priest after the order of Aaron, in the sense that this term is here used, is a man holding the office or authority Aaron held.

3rd.--That there is a distinction made between the office Melchizedek held and the patriarchal office Abraham held at the time here mentioned that he gave tithes to Melchizedek.

4th.--That the priests after the order of Aaron who anciently had charge of the altar and the sacrifices pertaining thereto, were High Priests.

5th.--That the Levitical priesthood is subject to the patriarchal priesthood which was held by Abraham before he held the office Melchizedek held, and which was held by Aaron and his seed down to the time of John the Baptist.

Therefore the three grand orders referred to here are:

1st.--The office Melchizedek held.

2nd.--The patriarchal office held by Abraham and Aaron.

3rd.--The Levitical priesthood. 2

The office held by Melchizedek, continues the Church of the Firstborn, "... is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to the Priesthood, and the keys of the Kingdom of God in all ages of the world to the latest posterity on the earth, and is the

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1 Hebrews 7:1,4,7,11,27.

2 Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 10.
channel through which all knowledge, doctrine, the plan of salvation, and every important matter is revealed from heaven."¹ This is the highest office pertaining to the priesthood—the Right of the Firstborn. It is held by only one man on the earth at a time (D&C 132:7). It "... has come down from before the foundations of the earth and was held by Adam in the beginning. It has remained upon the earth from the days of Adam to the present time and will remain to all eternity ... ."²

In tracing the succession of the Right of the Firstborn, it is asserted that Enoch held that office after the departure of Adam:

Enoch was twenty-five years old when he was ordained under the hand of Adam; and he was sixty-five and Adam blessed him. And he saw the Lord, and he walked with him, and was before his face continually; and he walked with God three hundred and sixty-five years, making him four hundred and thirty years old when he was translated.³

From Enoch the Right of the Firstborn allegedly passed to Lamech and then to Noah.⁴ Melchizedek received the office from Noah, and in turn purportedly bestowed it upon Abraham, who records that "... it was conferred upon me from the fathers; it came down from the fathers, from the beginning of time, yea, even from the beginning, or before the foundation of the earth to the present time, even the

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¹As cited from Joseph Fielding Smith (Compiler), Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News Press, 1938), pp. 166-67.

²Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., pp. 22, 30. This is allegedly what Joseph Smith meant when he said, "There has been a chain of authority and power from Adam down to the present time." As cited from Joseph Fielding Smith, op. cit., p. 191.


⁴As cited from Joseph Fielding Smith, op. cit., p. 171.
right of the firstborn, on the first man, who is Adam, our first
father, through the fathers unto me. The succession of the Right of
the Firstborn purportedly continued from Abraham to Moses as recorded
in the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants.

. It is further asserted that the office of the Grand Patriarch,
which is the first of the three grand priesthood offices under the
Right of the Firstborn, was also instituted in the days of Adam
"... and came down by lineage from Seth to John the Baptist ..." as
recorded in section 107 of the Doctrine and Covenants. This office,
continues the Church of the Firstborn, is the "second grand head of
priesthood," and "... is called the Priesthood of Aaron, because it
was conferred upon Aaron and his seed, throughout all their generations." It
is the only office ". . . which has come down by lineage from
father to son except where the Lord directed otherwise . . ." This
order of priesthood, it is asserted, ". . . holds the keys of all the
spiritual blessings, the work for the dead, etc., and holds all the keys
pertaining to the apostleship and the fulness of the Melchizedek priest-
hood, to act in concert with, yet subordinate to the office Moses held.

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1As cited from Pearl of Great Price (Salt Lake City: The Church
of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951), Abraham 1:3.

2Vss. 6-13. It should be noted, according to the Church of
the Firstborn, that ". . . there is a difference between the Melchize-
dek Priesthood which every faithful Elder has the right to hold and
the office Melchizedek held . . ." which is referred to in section 84
as the "Holy Priesthood" (v. 6) and "greater priesthood" (v. 19).
(The Priesthood of God, p. 14. See also Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit.,
p. 24.)

3The Priesthood of God, p. 17. See also, Ervil M. LeBaron,
op. cit., pp. 23, 39.


5Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 9. 6Tbid., p. 15.
The third grand head of priesthood, continues the "Firstborn" position, is the office of Presiding Bishop, which presides over the Levitical priesthood. The Presiding Bishop should be a literal descendant of Aaron, but the office, unlike the office of Grand Patriarch, is not self-perpetuating.¹

Moses, who allegedly received the Right of the Firstborn from Jethro, not only presided over Israel spiritually, but temporally and politically as well, claims the Church of the Firstborn. This means that he acted in a triple capacity, presiding as the Right of the Firstborn, and also holding the offices of Presiding Patriarch, Presiding Bishop and President of the Kingdom.²

It is further asserted that Moses sought to prepare the Children of Israel to personally meet God, but they hardened their hearts and consequently the Lord took Moses and the office of the Right of the Firstborn out of their midst. However, no one lost any priesthood or authority because of his departure. He simply didn't appoint a successor to hold the Right of the Firstborn, but remained himself upon the earth in a translated state holding that office.³

After the departure of Moses, Eleazar, the son of Aaron, ". . . stood at the head of the Church as the grand patriarch, holding the keys of the spiritual blessings . . . ." From Eleazar the office of grand Patriarch was allegedly passed to Elijah, who was translated and took with him a part of the keys. However, before his removal, Elijah committed the Patriarchal office to Elisha. This order of priesthood, we are told, continued as the presiding authority over Israel until John the Baptist.⁴

¹Ibid., pp. 8-9. ²Ibid., p. 17. ³Ibid., p. 16. ⁴Ibid., pp. 13, 15, 17.
Before Moses' departure, continues the Church of the Firstborn, Joshua was appointed president of the Kingdom.

[He] . . . was appointed to preside over the political branch of government and to command the armies of Israel . . . . [He] . . . presided over the political kingdom as well as acting in the office of president of the Church . . . . Thus we see that Joshua was under Eleazar in spiritual things, yet over him in political government. He was also over the presiding Bishop in the political field, yet under him in temporal concerns. He occupied the office of President of the Church by appointment through Moses and by the voice of the people, yet he did not hold the priesthood office and sceptre Moses held. This is the difference between a president of the Church who holds the priesthood office Moses held and a president of the Church who does not hold that office.¹

According to this, then, the Church government and authority remained after Moses' departure—the only difference being that Moses functioned in the office of the Firstborn in a translated state.

When John the Baptist came preaching to the Jews, he allegedly held the same office that Aaron had held—that of Presiding Patriarch, the second highest office in the priesthood. This is deduced from a statement by Joseph Smith that the keys of the Aaronic Priesthood were committed to John.² It is further reasoned that had he not held the office of Grand Patriarch, it would have "... confused the people for him to say, 'There cometh one mightier than I after me ... ."³ It is therefore, according to the Church of the Firstborn, evident, that he who was to come, would hold the Right of the Firstborn and should "... come to set in order the house of God and ordain new officers in the church organization. This was the only way this work could be

¹Ibid., p. 17.
²Cited in Joseph Fielding Smith, op. cit., p. 319.
³Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 12.
accomplished, in view of the state of apostacy and corruption in the Jewish Church . . . ."\(^1\)

It is further maintained that since Moses was the last to hold the Right of the Firstborn, it was he who bestowed that office upon the Savior.\(^2\) Thus the Lord held the highest office, and John the Baptist the second highest office pertaining to the priesthood in the Dispensation of the Meridian of Time. However, all the keys of priesthood held by Moses and Aaron were not restored at that time, nor have they yet been restored.\(^3\)

Inasmuch as the Savior was given the Right of the Firstborn by Moses, which can be held by only one man on the earth at a time, continues the Church of the Firstborn, it is evident that the authority given to Peter, James, and John as a quorum on the Mount of Transfiguration was "some lesser authority or commission."\(^4\) Neither did they receive the office of Grand Patriarch from John the Baptist, (who was one of the messengers that appeared on the Mount) because, ". . . the office John had held, he did not restore . . . but . . . continued to hold . . . until it was conferred upon Joseph Smith . . . May 15, 1829."\(^4\) Therefore, it is concluded, the authority conferred upon Peter, James, and John must have been that of the Presidency of Three, or First Presidency, which presides over the instruction and preparation

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 13. \(^2\)Ibid., p. 22.

\(^3\)Ibid., p. 25. That the keys of the priesthood have not all been restored is concluded from a statement by Joseph Smith: "Elijah was the last prophet that held the keys of the priesthood, and who will, before the last dispensation, restore the authority and deliver the keys of the priesthood . . . ." (Joseph Fielding Smith, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 172.)

\(^4\)Ervil M. LeBaron, \textit{op. cit.}, p. 43.
of the people, but which is subordinate to the Grand Patriarch and Right of the Firstborn.¹

When the Jews rejected the Savior, the burden of leading the church was placed upon Peter, James, and John. However, continues the argument, the office of the Right of the Firstborn was bestowed by the Savior, before His crucifixion, upon John the Beloved, as seen from the following account:

I say unto thee, Peter, this was a good desire; but my beloved has desired that he might do more, or a greater work yet among men than he has before done. Yea, he has undertaken a greater work; therefore I will make him as flaming fire and a ministering angel; he shall minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation who dwell on the earth.

And I will make thee a minister for him and thy brother James; and unto you three I will give this power and the keys of this ministry until I come.²

From this, "... it is clear that... John was to be translated and remain on the earth to hold the office held by Moses and Christ."³

It is further reasoned that since the Right of the Firstborn was hidden from the world after the crucifixion and the office of Presiding Patriarch was taken from the earth when John the Baptist died, "... it certainly appeared on the surface that Peter, James, and John held the highest authority; and that Peter, the chief apostle, was the very head."⁴ The present Christian world, "... even including the great majority of the Mormon people, believe this to the present time."⁵ Although, as asserted, John the Beloved held the Right of the Firstborn, "... he also held a lesser office and

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¹Ibid.  ²Doctrines and Covenants 7:5-7.
⁴Ibid., p. 39.  ⁵Ibid., p. 27.
functioned as a counselor to Peter in the quorum of First Presidency; yet it was not to perpetuate this office that he was translated.\(^1\)

He remained on the earth and carried on the kingdom until the people became so wicked that the Lord removed him.

The office of Presiding Patriarch, according to the Church of the Firstborn, which left the earth with John the Baptist, was not restored until May 15, 1829, when John appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. At that time, however, John allegedly ". . . did not confer everything he had held in his earthly ministry. He conferred the Levitical priesthood upon both Joseph and Oliver; and upon Joseph Smith alone, the Patriarchal office Aaron held . . ."\(^2\) On that occasion, it is asserted, Joseph was given only the office; the keys ". . . were not committed . . . nor have they all been restored to this day . . ."\(^3\)

According to the Church of the Firstborn, further evidence that Joseph received the office of Grand Patriarch is seen in this revelation:

> O hearken, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I speak unto you.

> For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.

> And this ye shall know assuredly—that there is none other

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 39.  
\(^2\)The Priesthood of God, p. 18.  
\(^3\)Evil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 37. Evidence for this assertion is deduced from Doctrine and Covenants 27:8: "Which John I have sent unto you, my servants, Joseph Smith, Jun., and Oliver Cowdery, to ordain you unto the first priesthood which you have received, that you might be called and ordained even as Aaron."
appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead."

It is maintained that when this revelation was given in February, 1831, Joseph had not yet received the Right of the Firstborn, ". . . therefore, the office above referred to could have been none other than the office John the Baptist held. The fact that he came alone to restore it shows that it is a self-perpetuating office . . . ."2

After receiving the Patriarchal office from John the Baptist, continues the Church of the Firstborn, Joseph next

. . . had the Melchizedek priesthood conferred upon him by Peter, James, and John. Next, Peter, James, and John give him the keys which they had received on the Mount through Elias (John the Baptist). After the prophet had received all these things, he held the Kingdom of God in his hands single-handed as did John the Baptist, whom Christ referred to as the greatest prophet born of woman. And that is what he held when he organized the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.3

It is held that Joseph Smith, after receiving the two offices of Grand Patriarch and President of the Church, functioned "in the spirit and power of Elias," to prepare the Saints for the restoration of the Church of the Firstborn.4 As President of the Church he officiated by the voice of the people, but in the higher office of Grand Patriarch, which is self-perpetuating, purportedly he functioned independent of and without the consent of the church.

A revelation given nearly three years after John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John restored the authority they held--in which the Lord revealed that Elias would yet come and restore all things--

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1Doctrine and Covenants 43:1-4. (Emphasis Supplied)
2Erril M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 38. 3Ibid., pp. 37, 38, 44.
4Ibid., p. 36
is cited as evidence that the restoration of the Right of the Firstborn was forthcoming.¹

According to the Church of the Firstborn, it was not, however, until April 3, 1836, when John the Beloved (Elias) appeared in the Kirtland Temple "... and committed the dispensation of the gospel of Abraham, saying that in us and our seed all generations after us should be blessed,"² that the highest priesthood office was restored. It is reasoned that the authority conferred by Elias "... would not have been lesser authority than that conferred by John the Baptist and Peter, James, and John, because the authority they restored has the power to appoint all lesser offices. Therefore, it could have been nothing other than the authority and office Moses held ...," namely, the Right of the Firstborn.³ It is asserted that this event marked the establishment of the Church of the Firstborn in this Dispensation as attested by Heber C. Kimball:

Here in the Territory of Deseret, is the kingdom of God, and here are the officers pertaining to that Kingdom; and here is the organization that is organized after the order of the Church of the Firstborn.

Let me explain what the Church of the Firstborn is. It is the first church that ever was raised up upon this earth; that is the firstborn Church. That is what I mean; and when God our Father organized that Church, He organized it just as His Father organized that Church on the earth where He dwelt; and that same order is organized here in the City of Great Salt Lake; and it is that order that Joseph Smith the Prophet of God organized in the beginning in Kirtland, Ohio. Brother Brigham Young, myself, and others were present when that was done, and when those officers received their endowments and blessings, and those keys were placed upon them, and that kingdom will stand forever.⁴

¹Doctrinal and Covenants 77:14. ²Ibid., 110:12
³Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 20.
⁴Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses by the President of the Church, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles and Others, reported
After the coming of Elias, continues the argument of the Church of the Firstborn, Joseph Smith presided in a dual capacity, holding the Right of the Firstborn and also the office of President of the Church. However, he bestowed the third office he held (the office of Grand Patriarch) upon Oliver Cowdery, from whom it passed to Joseph Smith, Senior, and then to Hyrum Smith. ¹ Consequently, the Prophet Joseph, as President of the Church, held an office subordinate to Oliver, Joseph Smith, Senior, and Hyrum in the church, but at the same time was above them in priesthood authority by virtue of the Right of the Firstborn. ¹

Prior to the death of the Prophet, the organization of the Church of the Firstborn purportedly stood as follows: Joseph Smith held the dual positions of the Right of the Firstborn and President of the Church; Hyrum Smith held the office of Grand Patriarch; Newel K. Whitney was the Presiding Bishop; and Brigham Young was the President of the Kingdom as well as President of the Twelve. ²

It is claimed that a provision was made by revelation whereby the grand offices held by Joseph and Hyrum were to be perpetuated through their posterity. ³ The office of Grand Patriarch subsequently passed to Joseph Smith, Senior, and after his death, to Hyrum Smith. Hyrum allegedly conferred it upon his uncle, John Smith, when, on the

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²Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 17.

³Doctrine and Covenants 124:56-61.
afternoon of June 26, 1844, shortly before the martyrdom, John visited his two nephews at the Carthage jail:

Patriarch John Smith came from Macedonia to jail to see his nephews, Joseph and Hyrum. The road was thronged with mobbers. Three of them snapped their guns at him, and he was threatened by many others who recognized him. The guard at the jail refused him admittance.

Joseph saw him through the prison window, and said to the guard, 'Let the old gentleman come in, he is my uncle.' The guard replied, they did not care who the hell he was uncle to, he should not go in.

Joseph replied, 'You will not hinder so old and infirm a man as he from coming in,' and then said, 'Come in, uncle,' on which, after searching him closely the guard let him pass into the jail, where he remained about an hour.1

When John Smith left the Carthage jail, asserts the Church of the Firstborn, "... he had received the appointment to hold the patriarchal office and keys held by Hyrum to hold in trust and to put upon one of Hyrum's sons who should qualify for that office ... ."2

Provision had also previously been made for the perpetuation of the office of the Right of the Firstborn held by Joseph Smith. It is claimed that Benjamin Johnson, "... who had become to the Prophet what John the Beloved was to the Savior ... was adopted by the Prophet, sealed to him as a son, and appointed to stand at the head of the Prophet's posterity. He was given the Right of the Firstborn."3

After the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum, continues the "Firstborn" argument, "... the Lord in His wisdom [saw] fit to again bring the apostleship of the First Presidency and the Twelve to the front before the world, and to keep the two grand heads of priesthood either totally or partially concealed ... ."4 Allegedly, the

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1 Documentary History of the Church, VI, 597-598.
2 Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., pp. 52-53.
3 The Priesthood of God, p. 28. 4 Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 39.
reason for this secrecy was "... because of the lack of preparation among the people to receive the greater blessings, and because of the unrelenting determination of the wicked to imprison, persecute, and shed the blood of the prophets of God;"1 also, "... to avoid another martyrdom ... to baffle the enemy, and out-general those who in the future should apostatise from the fulness of the gospel within the church as well as to thwart the evil purposes of the enemies of righteousness throughout the world."2 As a result, "... the great majority of the Mormon people, after the martyrdom of the Prophet, thought and still believe that Brigham Young held all the authority that Joseph Smith held ... ."3 The argument of the Firstborn is that such was not the case, however, for the Twelve Apostles did not receive "the office Joseph held, nor the office Hyrum held, nor the authority of the First Presidency ... ."4

It is asserted that the offices of Grand Patriarch and Right of the Firstborn, "... were concealed and held in reserve to accomplish the future purposes of the Lord; and it was for this reason that the order of the priesthood was not followed strictly ... after the Church moved to the Rocky Mountains."5

Brigham Young, it is claimed, "... understood the organization of the Church of the Firstborn and he knew who held the office which presides over that Church, but could not reveal these things to the people of his time because they were not prepared to receive them."6 It is further asserted that Brigham Young, by virtue of his

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1Ibid. 2Ibid., p. 52. 3Ibid., p. 17. 4Ibid., p. 42. 5Ibid., p. 52. 6Ibid., p. 40.
seniority in the Quorum of Twelve, "... could not possibly have succeeded Hyrum Smith in the office and authority he held, much less have inherited the priesthood sceptre of power held by Joseph the Prophet." And furthermore, he "... did not hold or claim to hold the priesthood sceptre held by Joseph Smith the Prophet." Although Brigham Young, as President of the Kingdom, was above John Smith in civil affairs, he realized that John was superior in priesthood authority. It was by the authority of the patriarchal office held by John Smith that the First Presidency was reorganized in 1847.

It has been assumed, continues the Church of the Firstborn, that when the President of the Church dies the responsibility of choosing his successor falls upon the Quorum of Twelve, the senior member of which succeeds to that office. It is asserted, however, that

This doctrine is 100% false—a doctrine of complete confusion! It has no support whatsoever in scripture. The First Presidency in the Church of God have higher offices and more presiding authority than the Twelve. All officers are subject to the authority that appoints them. A stream cannot rise higher than its fountain. Authority and power that can be conferred upon only one man on the earth at a time, can be conferred by only one man at a time. It must be conferred. It cannot be conferred upon twelve men at a time, or much less fall upon them without being conferred. No man can confer authority or power which has never been conferred upon him.

If the Twelve hold the keys of organization, as is supposed, then where is that authority and power spoken of in D.C. 132:7, which can be conferred upon only one man on earth at a time?

If the President of the Quorum of Three is the man spoken of in D.C. 132:7, then what happens to this authority when he dies? It cannot go to the Twelve, because only one man can hold it at a time.

The truth is that the authority spoken of in D.C. 132:7 is

1Ibid., p. 52. 2Ibid., p. 17. 3Ibid., p. 51, 52. 4Ibid., p. 53.
taken from the earth, breaking the Chain of Authority, unless a successor is appointed by the last one holding that authority and power.

The truth also is that the President of the Quorum of Three is not the man spoken of in D.C. 132:7. The President of the Quorum of Three does not appoint his successor as did the prophets and patriarchs of old. When he dies or otherwise relinquishes office, it is the duty of the next higher authority to appoint his successor. This would be the Presiding Patriarch, or in his absence, the man like Moses, holding the Right of the Firstborn.1

The Church of the Firstborn further maintains that the succession of the office of Grand Patriarch continued from John Smith, the Prophet's uncle, to John Smith, the son of Hyrum, "... who in turn put that grand office upon John W. Woolley. It is through this authority that the so-called "Fundamentalist" movement has been carried on upon an independent basis."2

In the Meridian of Time, when the time drew near for the coming of the Savior, "... he was preceded by a forerunner... who came to prepare a people for His ministry."3 And now, in this dispensation, continues the "Firstborn" argument, as the time approaches for the Second Coming of the Savior in power and glory, "... it is necessary that a man should prepare the way, who holds the priesthood sceptre Moses held, together with all the keys pertaining thereunto."3 One of the reasons for this is that the Saints must be prepared to enter into the terrestrial state, "... which condition cannot be brought about through any other channel or authority. There must be a man with all the keys and authority held by Enoch, in order to bring the people into the presence of God and usher in the Millenium."3


2Ervil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 53. 3Ibid., p. 29.
We are informed that prior to the Second Coming, it will be necessary to call 144,000 men to assist in this great work. Consequently, inasmuch as Joseph Smith "... did not hold all the keys of the priesthood pertaining to the last dispensation ...", it is necessary that an Elias be raised up "... to consummate the restoration spoken of by the prophets."  

It is maintained, in conclusion, that shortly before the death of Benjamin Johnson, he conferred the Right of the Firstborn upon his grandson, Alma Dayer LeBaron, Sr., "... who was also a grandson of the Prophet Joseph by adoption ...". Johnson is said to have informed his grandson: "When I die, my mantle will fall upon you, even as the mantle of Elijah fell upon Elisha, when he ascended to heaven in a chariot of fire." He was told "to stay in the front ranks of the Saints in their march to the South and to never go back over the old trail, but to raise his family in Mexico ...". He was further purportedly instructed that "the next great work pertaining to the building up of the kingdom of God in the last days will transpire in the South, and the Lord has a great and important work for you and your sons in that land."  

Then, prior to his death, continues the argument, Alma called his son Joel to his bedside and gave him the following charge:

When I die my mantle will fall upon you, even as the mantle of Elijah fell upon Elisha, and even as the mantle of my grandfather fell upon me; and you will have to round up your shoulders and

1Doctrine and Covenants 77:11.
2Orvil M. LeBaron, op. cit., p. 34.
3Ibid., p. 54. 4Ibid. 5Ibid. 6Ibid., p. 55.
bear it, because there is no one else qualified. I have tried to qualify your older brothers, but have only met with rebellion and opposition.\footnote{Ibid.}

This alleged transferral of the Right of the Firstborn occurred on February 1, 1951, at Galeana, Chihuahua, Mexico. Since that time, Joel LeBaron has been "setting the house of God in order" and "dividing the wheat from the tares" as foretold in the 85th and 86th sections of the Doctrine and Covenants.\footnote{Ibid.} He is the "Elias" raised up to "consummate the restoration." We are further told that the work of gathering the 144,000 in preparation for the Millennium has begun. In the words of Joel LeBaron himself, "the same God who sent Elijah to a contest with the priests of Baal has sent me to a contest with the priests of Mormondon. The contest this time is based on pure knowledge of the Priesthood of God."\footnote{\textquotedblleft The Excommunication of Joel LeBaron,	extquotedblright The Rolling Stone (No. 8, Sept., 1955), p. 6.}

A review of the succession of authority from Joseph Smith as propounded by the two significant "Fundamentalist" factions of the Latter-day Saint Church has shown that although basically united in the belief of a special "high priesthood" functioning independent of the Church, there is much disagreement concerning the organization and perpetuation of that priesthood.
CHART SHOWING THE CHURCH OF THE FIRSTBORN CONCEPT OF

PRIESTHOOD ORGANIZATION AND SUCCESSION

THE RIGHT OF THE FIRSTBORN

PRESIDING PATRIARCH

CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LDS

FIRST PRESIDENCY

QUORUM OF TWELVE

QUORUM OF SEVENTY

Presiding Bishop

President of the Kingdom

Adam
Abel
Enoch
Lamech
Noah
Melchizedek
Abraham
Esaias
Gad
Jeremy
Elihu
Caleb
Jethro
Moses
Christ
John the Revelator
Joseph Smith
Benjamin Johnson
Alma Dayer LeBaron
Joel F. LeBaron

Joshua
Brigham Young

Adam
Seth
Enos
Cainan
Mahalaleel
Jared
Enoch
Nethuselah
Lamech
Noah
Abraham
Isaac
Jacob
Joseph
Ephraim
Aaron
Eleazar
Elijah
Elisha
Zacharias
John the Baptist
Joseph Smith Jr.
Oliver Cowdery
Joseph Smith Sr.
Hyrum Smith
John Smith
John Smith
John W. Woolley

Joshua
Peter
Joseph Smith Jr.
Brigham Young
John Taylor
Wilford Woodruff
Lorenzo Snow
Joseph F. Smith
Heber J. Grant
George A. Smith
David O. McKay
CHAPTER III

THE SUCCESSION OF AUTHORITY FROM JOSEPH SMITH--

THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW

... a day or two ago, a man came here and notified the President of the Twelve that he was to be the successor to Brigham. The most charitable construction you can put upon such speeches is that the man is crazy. Whenever the voice of the Lord comes upon such a subject, it will come with the power and demonstration of the Holy Ghost and with much assurance, and every Latter-day Saint on the earth will receive it, because the Spirit of God will bear testimony to our spirits that it is from Him, so that we cannot be deceived.¹

The "Fundamentalist" and "Church of the Firstborn" concepts of authority presented in the preceding chapter presuppose that the succession of authority from Joseph Smith is not clearly understood by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and that the true succession was secretly perpetuated unknown to the Church. An effort will therefore be made in this chapter to determine the extent to which the succession of authority was set forth and understood by the Church.

The appearance of the Father and the Son to Joseph Smith in the spring of 1820 inaugurated what is known to Latter-day Saints as the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times. A dispensation, when referring to the Gospel of Jesus Christ, means the dispensing of the word of God to mankind under the direction of certain chosen individuals

¹George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses (October 8, 1877), XIX, 236.
who are invested with power to act in God's name.\(^1\) During the history of the earth, several dispensations of the Gospel have been established, each of which was characterized by a special work, but which was eventually withdrawn due to the wickedness of mankind. However, "... in this last dispensation which God has given to man, there will be no more uprooting and destruction of his kingdom from the earth--it is established never more to be thrown down, in fulfillment of ancient prophecy. This is what makes this dispensation of greater importance than all which have preceded it."\(^2\) Joseph Smith recorded that the Dispensation of the Fulness of Times constitutes "a ... complete and perfect union, and welding together of dispensations, and keys, and powers and glories ... from the days of Adam ... to the present time."\(^3\) It is further recorded that the Lord conferred upon Joseph "... the keys of my kingdom, and a dispensation of the gospel for the last times; and for the fulness of times, in ... which I will gather together in one all things both which are in heaven, and which are on earth ... ."\(^4\)

According to LDS doctrine, the "keys" referred to above, have reference to the authority to designate how and under what circumstances the priesthood, (which is defined as the power to act in God's name) may be used. According to LDS doctrine, although Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery received the Melchizedek priesthood in 1829,

\(^1\)B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), I, xxix. (Hereafter referred to as Comprehensive History of the Church.)

\(^2\)Orson Pratt, Journal of Discourses (April 7, 1873), XVI, 1-2.

\(^3\)Doctrine and Covenants 128:18. \(^4\)Ibid., 27:13.
the transferral of all the keys of authority was not completed until later, when representatives of past dispensations came to the earth and conferred upon the Prophet the particular keys they had held.

A statement of Wilford Woodruff is one of many concerning the transferral of these keys:

... Joseph Smith ... lived until he received every key, ordinance and law ever given to any man on the earth, from Father Adam down, touching this dispensation. He received powers and keys from under the hands of Moses for gathering the house of Israel in the last days; he received under the hands of Elias the keys of sealing the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the hearts of the children to the fathers; he received under the hands of Peter, James, and John, the Apostleship, and everything belonging thereto; he received under the hands of Koroni all the keys and powers required of the stick of Joseph in the hands of Ephraim; he received under the hand of John the Baptist the Aaronic Priesthood, with all its keys and powers, and every other key and power belonging to this dispensation, and I am not ashamed to say that he was a Prophet of God, and he laid the foundation of the greatest work and dispensation that has ever been established on the earth.¹

It should be further noted, according to LDS doctrine, that in their fulness, the keys of authority are held by only one person at a time on the earth—the President of the Church:

He holds all the keys of every nature, pertaining to the dispensation of the fulness of times. All the keys of former dispensations which have been revealed are vested in him.

He ... has the right to delegate authority and to withdraw authority as he sees fit and receives inspiration so to do.

No man ... has the right to officiate in any ordinance of this gospel for any soul contrary to the sanction and approval of the man who holds the keys of authority in the Church ... .

... he can delegate that power unto others that they may act, and that they may seal on earth, and it is valid, it is binding, so long as he sanctions it; if he withdraws it, no man can exercise that power.²

¹Wilford Woodruff, Journal of Discourses (October 8, 1873), XVI, 267.

The first suggestion in LDS Church history of a successor to the Prophet Joseph Smith is found in a revelation directed to Oliver Cowdery a few months after the Church was organized. On that occasion, Oliver, who stood next to the Prophet in holding the keys of authority in this dispensation, had declared one of the Prophet's revelations to be erroneous and commanded him "... in the name of God to erase those words, that no priestcraft be amongst us!"  

About this same time, Hiram Page, one of the eight witnesses to the Book of Mormon, had found a certain stone through which he was receiving "revelations" concerning the upbuilding of Zion and the Church. The contents of these "revelations" were at variance with those received by Joseph Smith. It was in this setting that the following revelation is recorded as an instruction to Oliver Cowdery from the Lord:

... if thou art led at any time by the Comforter to speak or teach, or at all times by the way of commandment unto the church, thou mayest do it.  
But thou shalt not write by way of commandment, but by wisdom;  
And thou shalt not command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church;
For I have given him the keys of the mysteries, and the revelations which are sealed, until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead.

Cowdery was further advised,

... to take thy brother, Hiram Page, between him and thee alone, and tell him that those things which he hath written from that stone are not of me, and that Satan deceiveth him;  
For, behold, these things have not been appointed unto him, neither shall anything be appointed unto any of this church contrary to the church covenants.

1Joseph Smith, Jr., History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1949), I, 105. (Hereafter referred to as Documentary History of the Church.)
2Ibid., pp. 109-10.  
3Doctrine and Covenants 28:4-7.
4Ibid., vss. 11-13.
According to this revelation, upon Joseph Smith, and he alone, rested the authority to regulate the affairs of the Church as a whole, until the Lord should appoint another to succeed him.

In December, 1830, shortly after joining the church, Sidney Rigdon visited the Prophet and requested instructions from the Lord. An ensuing revelation furnishes the second mention of a successor to the Prophet Joseph:

... I have sent forth the fulness of my gospel by the hand of my servant Joseph; and in weakness have I blessed him; And I have given unto him the keys of the mystery of those things which have been sealed, even things which were from the foundation of the world, and the things which shall come from this time until the time of my coming, if he abide in me, and if not, another will I plant in his stead.¹

In February, 1831, the Church was confronted with the claims of a "prophetess" by the name of Hubble who "... professed ... to have many revelations, and knew the Book of Mormon was true, and that she should become a teacher in the church of Christ. ..."² Although the assurance had already been given that no one was authorized "... to go forth to preach my gospel, or to build up my church, except he be ordained by some one who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority and has been regularly ordained by the heads of the Church,"³ yet Hubble "... appeared to be very sanctimonious and deceived some who were not able to detect her ..."⁴ To allay the confusion that followed, the Prophet Joseph again approached the Lord and received the following instructions:

¹Ibid., 35:17-18.
²Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, I, 154.
³Doctrine and Covenants 42:11.
⁴Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, I, 154.
0 hearken, ye elders of my church, and give ear to the words which I shall speak unto you.

For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations from my hand.

And this ye shall know assuredly—that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him; for if it be taken from him he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead.

And this shall be a law unto you, that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments;

And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me.¹

Although Joseph Smith had been authorized to organize the church in 1830, the establishment of the Presiding quorums thereof did not take place until the need later arose. It was not until January 25, 1832, that the office of the President of the Church was established. On that date Joseph was sustained as "President of the High Priesthood" at a conference at Amherst, Ohio.² It is recorded that two months later Frederick G. Williams was called by the Lord to be "... a counselor unto my servant Joseph Smith, Jun.; unto whom I have given the keys of the kingdom, which belong always unto the Presidency of the High Priesthood. ..."³

It is significant to note here that in the revelations concerning the succession of authority given prior to 1833, the reservation was made that should the prophet fail in his calling the Lord would replace him, and that Joseph would retain only sufficient authority to

¹ Doctrine and Covenants 43:1-6.
² Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, I, 243, 267.
³ Doctrine and Covenants 81:1-2.
ordain a successor. This reservation was removed, however, in a revelation recorded on March 8, 1833, in which the Prophet's position as President of the High Priesthood was reaffirmed, with the additional promise that "... the keys of this kingdom shall never be taken from you, while thou art in the world, neither in the world to come; nevertheless, through you shall the oracles be given to another, yea, even unto the church."¹ In this same revelation, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams were called as counselors to Joseph in the Presidency and were appointed to be equal with him "... in holding the keys of the last kingdom." Ten days later, on March 18, at a meeting of the School of the Prophets, the First Presidency of the Church was completely organized, when Joseph ordained Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams "... to take part with me in holding the keys of this last kingdom, and to assist in the Presidency of the High Priesthood, as my Counselors ... ."² These three men, then, comprised the Quorum of the First Presidency, or the Presidency of the High Priesthood of the church.

In 1834, Oliver Cowdery, who had been in Missouri assisting W. W. Phelps with the printing business of the church, returned and was appointed assistant president of the Church. He had been with Joseph each time authority was conferred and had been designated by revelation as the second elder of the church. Accordingly, on December 5, 1834, the Prophet records that the First Presidency met with Oliver Cowdery and:

¹Ibid., 90:3-4.
²Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, I, 334.
... according to the direction of the Holy Spirit ... I laid my hands on Brother Oliver Cowdery, and ordained him an assistant-president, saying these words: 'In the name of Jesus Christ, who was crucified for the sins of the world, I lay my hands upon thee and ordain thee an assistant-president to the High and Holy Priesthood, in the Church of the Latter-day Saints.'

The next important step in the succession of authority is noted on February 14, 1835, when a conference, consisting of the members of Zion's Camp, convened at Kirtland, Ohio, for the purpose of choosing the first Quorum of Twelve in the new dispensation. The three witnesses to the Book of Mormon had been previously designated in a revelation with the task of choosing the Twelve. Consequently, on the afternoon of the Kirtland conference, Joseph Smith announced that "... the first business of the meeting was for the Three Witnesses of the Book of Mormon, to pray, each one, and then proceed to choose twelve men from the Church, as Apostles, to go to all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people." The three witnesses—Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris—after uniting in prayer and being "... blessed by the laying on of the hands of the Presidency" then proceeded to ordain the Twelve.

In a revelation recorded a few weeks later, it was made known that the quorum of Twelve "... form a quorum equal in authority ..." to the three Presiding High Priests who constitute the Presidency of the High Priesthood of the Church. As pertaining to the succession of authority, the position of the Twelve in relation to the First

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1Ibid., II, 176. 2Doctrine and Covenants 18:37.
3Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, II, 186-87.
Presidency was more clearly defined at a special meeting of the Twelve and First Presidency on January 16, 1836, during which the Prophet stated that the Twelve "... are not subject to any other than the First Presidency, viz, 'myself ... Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, who are now my Counselors; and where I am not, there is no First Presidency over the Twelve.'"¹

At a conference of the church held in Nauvoo, Illinois, on August 16, 1841, Joseph Smith announced that the time had come when the Twelve should be called upon to stand in their place next to the First Presidency.² This pronouncement became a reality when the Prophet, having already received "... every key, ordinance and law ever given to any man on the earth, from Father Adam down, touching this dispensation,"³ conferred that authority upon the Twelve Apostles just before his death in 1844 as later recorded by George Q. Cannon:

... Joseph bestowed upon the Twelve Apostles all the keys and authority and power that he himself possessed and that he had received from the Lord ... There was no key that he held, there was no authority that he exercised that he did not bestow upon the Twelve Apostles at that time. Of course, in doing this he did not divest himself of the keys; but he bestowed upon them these keys and this authority and power, so that they held them in their fulness as he did, differing only in this respect, that they exercised them subordinate to him as the head of the dispensation. He ordained them to all this authority, without withholding a single power or key or ordinance that he himself had received.⁴

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¹Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, II, 373-74.

²Ibid., IV, 403.

³Supra, p. 46. See also, Doctrine and Covenants 110.

⁴George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses (October 29, 1832), XXIII, 362-63.
Wilford Woodruff, one of the members of the Quorum of Twelve who was present on that occasion, also testified concerning this trans-
ferral of authority:

The Prophet Joseph I am now satisfied had a thorough presenti-
ment that that was the last meeting we would hold together here
in the flesh. We had had our endowments; we had had all the
blessings sealed upon our heads that were ever given to the
Apostles or Prophets on the face of the earth. On that occasion
the Prophet Joseph rose up and said to us, 'Brethren, I have
desired to live to see this temple [Nauvoo] built. I shall never
live to see it, but you will. I have sealed upon your heads all
the keys of the Kingdom of God. I have sealed upon you every key,
power, principle that the God of heaven has revealed to me. Now,
no matter where I may go or what I may do, the Kingdom rests
upon you.'

As already noted, the office of assistant president of the
church had been created in 1835 when Oliver Cowdery was set apart to
that position. He stood next to Joseph and had the Prophet been killed
in 1835, would have succeeded him as the president of the High Priest-
hood. However, Oliver did not remain true to the church and sub-
sequently lost his position when he was excommunicated in April, 1838.
About this same time Frederick G. Williams apostatized, creating a
vacancy in the First Presidency, which was filled by the appointment
of Hyrum Smith. Then, when Joseph Smith, Senior, the presiding patri-
arch, died on September 14, 1840, Hyrum was selected as his successor.
According to a revelation given on January 19, 1841, the Lord design-
nated Hyrum as "... a prophet, and a seer, and a revelator unto my
church, as well as my servant Joseph." He was invested "... with
the same blessing, and glory, and honor, and Priesthood and gifts of
the Priesthood, that once were put upon him that was my servant Oliver

1"The Keys of the Kingdom," The Contributor, August, 1889,
pp. 380-34.
According to this, then, Hyrum stood next to the Prophet in the succession of authority and had he survived, would have succeeded his brother as President of the church.  

At the time of the martyrdom of Joseph and Hyrum, most of the Twelve Apostles were engaged in missionary work in the eastern part of the United States. Before they could return to Nauvoo, Sidney Rigdon arrived from Philadelphia claiming authority to be the guardian of the church. He had been a counselor to the Prophet in the First Presidency but had become alienated from the Church and had moved to Philadelphia. Sidney arrived in Nauvoo on August 3, 1844, and immediately began asserting his claims as guardian of the church. Three days later, a majority of the Twelve had returned and met in a special council, during which Rigdon was invited to present his claims to authority. He claimed to have had a vision on June 27, the day of the Prophet's death, in which,

It was shown to me that this church must be built up to Joseph, and that all the blessings we receive must come through him. I have been ordained a spokesman to Joseph, and I must come to Nauvoo and see that the church is governed in a proper manner . . . . No man can be the successor of Joseph.

. . . the martyred Prophet is still the head of this church; every quorum should stand as you stood in your washings and consecrations. I have been consecrated a spokesman to Joseph, and I was commanded to speak for him . . . .

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1Doctrinal and Covenants 124:94-95.

2The position of the Twelve in relation to Hyrum Smith was clarified by Brigham Young at the general conference of the Church in October, 1844: "... if you don't know whose right it is to give revelations, I will tell you, It is I. There never has a man stood between Joseph and the Twelve, and unless we apostatize there never will. If Hyrum had lived he would not have stood between Joseph and the Twelve, but he would have stood for Joseph. --Did Joseph ordain any man to take his place? He did. Who was it? It was Hyrum, but, Hyrum fell a martyr before Joseph did. If Hyrum had lived he would have acted for Joseph . . . ." Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, VII, 239.
I propose to be a guardian to the people; in this I have discharged my duty and done what God has commanded me, and the people can please themselves whether they accept me or not.\(^1\)

Following Sidney Rigdon, Brigham Young addressed the council:

I do not care who leads the church, even though it were Ann Lee; but one thing I must know, and that is what God says about it. I have the keys and the means of obtaining the mind of God on the subject.

I know there are those in our midst who will seek the lives of the Twelve as they did the lives of Joseph and Hyrum. We shall ordain others and give the fulness of the priesthood, so that if we are killed the fulness of the priesthood may remain. Joseph conferred upon our heads all the keys and powers belonging to the Apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away, and no man or set of men can get between Joseph and the Twelve in this world or in the world to come.

How often has Joseph said to the Twelve, 'I have laid the foundation and you must build thereon, for upon your shoulders the kingdom rests.'\(^2\)

He closed his remarks by announcing that a special conference would convene the following day, to decide the question of leadership for the church.

At ten a.m. the next morning the conference opened. Sidney Rigdon was given opportunity to present his case, and according to the record, he "... harangued the saints for about one and a half hours, upon choosing a guardian for the church."\(^3\) The meeting was then adjourned until 2 p.m. during which, Brigham Young addressed the gathering:

For the first time in my life, for the first time in your lives, for the first time in the kingdom of God in the 19th century, without a Prophet at our head, do I step forth to act in my calling in connection with the Quorum of the Twelve, as Apostles of Jesus Christ unto this generation--Apostles whom God has called by revelation through the Prophet Joseph, who are ordained and anointed to bear off the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world.

When I came to this stand I had peculiar feelings and impressions.

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\(^1\)Tbid., pp. 229-30.  \(^2\)Tbid., p. 230.  \(^3\)Tbid., p. 231
The faces of this people seem to say, we want a shepherd to guide and lead us through this world. All that want to draw away a party from the church after them, let them do it if they can, but they will not prosper.

If any man thinks he has influence among this people to lead away a party, let him try it, and he will find out that there is power with the Apostles which will carry them off victorious through all the world, and build up and defend the church and kingdom of God.

Here is President Rigdon, who was counselor to Joseph. I ask, where are Joseph and Hyrum? They are gone beyond the veil; and if Elder Rigdon wants to act as his counselor, he must go beyond the veil where he is.

If the people want President Rigdon to lead them they may have him; but I say unto you that the Quorum of the Twelve have the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world.

The Twelve are appointed by the finger of God. They stand next to Joseph, and are as the First Presidency of the Church.

You cannot fill the office of a prophet, seer and revelator: God must do this. You must not appoint any man at our head; if you should, the Twelve must ordain him. You cannot appoint a man at our head; but if you do want any other man or men to lead you, take them and we will go our way to build up the kingdom in all the world.

I know where the keys of the kingdom are, and where they will eternally be. You cannot call a man to be a prophet; you cannot take Elder Rigdon and place him above the Twelve; if so, he must be ordained by them.

So long as we remain as we are, the heavenly Head is in constant cooperation with us; and if you go out of that course, God will have nothing to do with you.

I want to live on the earth and spread truth through all the world. You saints of Latter-days want things right. If 10,000 men rise up and say they have the Prophet Joseph Smith's shoes, I know they are imposters.

Now, if you want Sidney Rigdon or William Law to lead you, or anybody else, you are welcome to them; but I tell you, in the name of the Lord that no man can put another between the Twelve and the Prophet Joseph. Why? Because Joseph was their file leader, and he has committed into their hands the keys of the kingdom in this last dispensation, for all the world; don't put a thread between the priesthood and God.

I will ask, who has stood next to Joseph and Hyrum? I have, and I will stand next to him. We have a head, and that head is the Apostleship, the spirit and power of Joseph, and we can now begin to see the necessity of that Apostleship.\(^1\)

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\(^1\)Tbid., pp. 232-35.
The power with which Brigham Young spoke on this occasion was attested by several of those present. George Q. Cannon, in commenting on this, observed that had the Prophet Joseph Smith

... arisen from the dead and again spoken in their hearing, the effect could not have been more startling than it was to many present at that meeting; it was the voice of Joseph Himself; and not only was it the voice of Joseph which was heard, but it seemed in the eyes of the people as if it were the very person of Joseph which stood before them. A more wonderful and miraculous event than was wrought that day in the presence of that congregation we never heard of. The Lord gave his people a testimony that left no room for doubt as to who was the man chosen to lead them.¹

William C. Staines, who was also present on that occasion, records that Brigham Young spoke "... with the voice like the voice of the Prophet Joseph. I thought it was he, and so did thousands who heard it. This was very satisfactory to the people, and a vote was taken to sustain the Twelve in their office, which with few dissenting voices, was passed."²

¹Ibid., p. 236.

²Ibid. A later comment by George Q. Cannon upon this subject is also pertinent: "... It was necessary that there should be some manifestation of the power of God, because the people were divided. There was considerable of doubt as to who should lead the Church. People had supposed that Joseph would live to redeem Zion. They felt very much as the disciples did after the crucifixion: 'We trusted,' said they to the Savior, whom they knew not, while speaking of their Lord, 'that it had been He which should have redeemed Israel.' They were saddened in their hearts. So the Saints were when the Prophet Joseph was taken from them. Some even went so far as to think that perhaps God would resurrect him, they had such an idea about his continued earthly connection with this work. But no sooner did President Young arise than the power of God rested down upon him in the face of the people. It did not appear to be Brigham Young; it appeared to be Joseph Smith that spoke to the people—Joseph in his looks, in his manner, and in his voice; even his figure was transformed so that it looked like that of Joseph, and everybody present, who had the Spirit of God, saw that he was the man whom God had chosen to hold the keys now that the Prophet Joseph had gone behind the veil, and that he had given him power to exercise them. And from that time forward, notwithstanding the claims of Sidney Rigdon; notwithstanding the claims of..."
Upon the conclusion of Brigham Young's remarks, Sidney Rigdon was given an opportunity to speak but he declined. The question of whether the Saints wished to sustain the Twelve or Sidney Rigdon as the leader of the church was about to be presented when Rigdon suggested that the question of supporting the Twelve be presented first. Whereupon, Brigham Young asked the people if they desired to sustain "... the Twelve as the First Presidency of this people?" He continued:

... If the church want the Twelve to stand as the head, the First Presidency of the Church, and at the head of this kingdom in all the world, stand next to Joseph, walk up into their calling, and hold the keys of this kingdom, every man, every woman, every quorum is now put in order, and you are now the sole controllers of it.

All that are in favor of this, in all the congregation of the saints, manifest it by holding up the right hand. (There was a universal vote). If there are any of the contrary mind, every man and every woman who does not want the Twelve to preside, lift up your hands in like manner. (No hands up). This supersedes the other question, and trying it by quorums.¹

William Smith, John E. Page and others who drew off from the Church in the days of Nauvoo; and notwithstanding the claims of other men who have since drawn off from the Church and made great pretensions, God has borne testimony to the acts and teachings of His servant Brigham, and those of his servants, the Apostles, who received the keys in connection with him ... . All the authority, all the power, all the keys, and all the blessings that were necessary for the guidance of this people he held. He held them as his fellow-servants, the Apostles, held them; only he, being the senior, had the right to preside, and did preside, God sustaining him in so doing. Then when he died there was no need for any peculiar or overpowering manifestation, such as was witnessed when the Prophet Joseph died, because the authority of the Priesthood was recognized, and among the Twelve there was no dissent. We all knew the men whose right it was to preside, there being no doubt upon this matter. We knew he had the authority. We knew that there was only one man at a time upon the earth that could hold the keys of the kingdom of God, and that man was the presiding Apostle." George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses, (October 29, 1882), XXIII, 364.

¹Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, VII, 240.
The Quorum of Twelve, with Brigham Young as President, presided over the affairs of the church for three years following the death of Joseph Smith. It was during the exodus of the Saints from Nauvoo to the Salt Lake Valley in 1847 that the Quorum of the First Presidency was reorganized. After arriving in the Great Basin and establishing the pioneer company, Brigham Young and several of the Twelve returned to Winter Quarters, Iowa, to further assist in the westward migration. During this mission eight members of the Twelve met in council at the home of Orson Hyde at Kanesville on December 5, 1847, at which time the First Presidency was reorganized. During the meeting several of the Twelve spoke, after which, Brigham Young records: "... I was unanimously elected President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, with authority to nominate my two counselors, which I did by appointing Heber C. Kimball my first counselor and Willard Richards my second counselor, and the appointments were unanimously sustained."1 On December 27 at a general conference of the church held in a log building in Council Bluffs, Iowa, Brigham Young and his counselors were unanimously sustained by the church.2

At the October conference of the church in 1852, Heber C. Kimball observed that "there are a great many who have the idea that the time will come when we shall be broken up as a people. Do I fear any such thing? No, I do not ... ." He then commented upon the right of Brigham Young to preside over the church in these words:

... Have I the least hesitation as to his calling as the

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1Ibid., p. 621.
2Ibid., p. 623. See also, Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, III, 316ff.
President of this Church? No, no more than I have that God sits upon His throne. He has the same authority that brother Joseph had. That authority was in the Twelve, and since brother Joseph stepped behind the vail, [sic] brother Brigham is his lawful successor. I bear testimony of what brother Joseph said on the stand at Nauvoo, and I presume hundreds here can bear witness of the same. Said he, 'These men that are set here behind me on this stand, I have conferred upon them all the power, Priesthood, and authority that God ever conferred upon me.' There are hundreds present this day who heard him utter words to that effect, more than once.¹

The First Presidency organized in 1847 continued until August 29, 1877, when Brigham Young passed away. Upon his death, the Quorum of Twelve became the presiding body over the Saints for the second time. During the general conference of the church held in Salt Lake City in October, 1877, Apostle Orson Pratt once again clarified a few points regarding the succession of authority in the church:

... This is the second time in the history of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, when the Twelve have stepped forward as the proper authorities, to bear off this kingdom, and to preside over the Church. Joseph was in our midst but a few years. The Lord called him to lay the foundation of this work. He ordained him and Oliver Cowdery to the Apostleship, giving them the authority... to perform the things necessary in the future organization of the Church... He having performed the work God required at his hands, was taken away; the Lord saw proper to remove him from our midst. The authority then devolved upon the Twelve, and upon the Priesthood of the Twelve...

... In those days, some persons, ignorant of the authority of an Apostle, questioned the right of the Twelve to preside, but I would ask, what authority ever existed in the Church that the Twelve do not hold? I would further inquire, had the First Presidency any office that the Twelve had not?... We have been taught ever since the Twelve were chosen, that they held all the power of the Apostleship that could be conferred upon mortal man...²

George Q. Cannon, speaking at the same conference, stated that

¹Heber C. Kimball, Journal of Discourses (October 8, 1852), I, 206.
²Orson Pratt, Ibid. (October 5, 1877), XIX, 213-14.
he had been interrogated on numerous occasions by what he termed "inexperienced Saints," wondering who would succeed President Young when he died. Cannon then clarified the matter by saying:

Every man who is ordained to the fulness of Apostleship, has the power and the authority to lead and guide the people of God whenever he is called upon to it, and the responsibility rests upon him. But there is a difference, . . . that arises in some instances from seniority in age, in other instances from seniority in ordination. And while it is the right of all the Twelve Apostles to receive revelation, and for each one to be a Prophet, to be a Seer, to be a Revelator, and to hold the keys in the fulness, it is only the right of one man at a time to exercise that power in relation to the whole people, and to give revelation and counsel, and direct the affairs of the Church—of course, always acting in conjunction with his fellow-servants. And while we say that the Twelve Apostles have the right to govern, that the Twelve have the authority, that the Twelve Apostles are the men who preside—when we say this, we do not mean that every one of the Twelve is going to give revelation to this great people, that every one of the Twelve has the right to counsel and dictate and regulate the affairs of the Church as emergencies may arise, independent of the rest. The Church is not governed like Zion's Co-operative Institution, by a Board of Directors; this is not God's design. It is governed by men who hold the keys of the Apostleship, who have the right and authority. Any one of them, should an emergency arise, can act as President of the Church, with all the powers, with all the authority, with all the keys, and with every endowment necessary to obtain revelation from God, and to lead and guide this people in the path that leads to the celestial glory; but there is only one man at a time who can hold the keys, who can dictate, who can guide who can give revelation to the Church. The rest must acquiesce in his action, the rest must be governed by his counsels, the rest must receive his doctrines. It was so with Joseph. Others held the Apostleship—Oliver received the Apostleship at the same time that Joseph did, but Joseph held the keys, although Oliver held precisely the same authority. There was only one who could exercise it in its fulness and power among the people. So also at Joseph's death, there was only one man who could exercise that authority and hold these keys, and that man was President Brigham Young, the President of the Quorum of the Twelve whom God had singled out, who by extraordinary providence had been brought to the front, although many were ahead of him according to ordination at one time and another.

Now that he has gone, one man only can hold this power and authority to which I refer, and that man is he whom you sustained yesterday, as President of the Quorum of the Twelve, as one of the Twelve Apostles and of the Presidency, John Taylor by name. When revelation comes to this people, as a people, it is he who has the right to impart it; and while the Twelve are associated with him, one in power, one in authority, they must respect him as
their President, they must look to him as the men through whom the voice of God will come to them, and to this entire people...1

The speaker closed his remarks with the query:

I suspect you would like to know why a man and his two Counselors are not singled out, called and set apart by the voice of the people at this Conference, as the First Presidency of the Church? The reason is simply this: the Lord has not revealed it to us; he has not commanded us to do this, and until he does require this at our hands, we shall not do it. For the present, it seems to be the mind and will of God, as manifested to us, that the Twelve should preside over the Church...

The Council of Twelve continued as the presiding quorum of the Church for about three years—until the general conference held in October, 1890, when John Taylor was sustained as the third President of the church, choosing for his counselors George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith.

Orson Pratt, speaking again on this occasion, noted that, 

...we [the Quorum of Twelve] have acted for a short time as a Presiding Council in the midst of the Church of God. We did so upon the death of the Prophet Joseph. The Spirit of God wrougt upon his servants, that during our administration for some three or four years after the death of Brother Joseph, the First Presidency was not organized. Did the Council of the Twelve forget it? No. Did they ignore it? No; they all the time had their minds fixed upon the revelation which God had given showing that the Council of the First Presidency was the supreme Council and authority in the Church, and that the Twelve could not act in that supreme authority and power only as the First Presidency was made vacant. This Quorum was reorganized some three or four years after the death of the Prophet, and it continued organized until the year 1877, and upon the death of President Young, who was the President in the First Presidency, it then fell again upon the Twelve as formerly, and they have continued some three years and upwards occupying that position. Have they done right? Yes; they have done as they were required to do during the time being. And now, after having performed their duties, they still keep in mind the necessity of this First Quorum

1George Q. Cannon, Ibid. (October 8, 1877), XIX, 233-34.
2Ibid., p. 237.
of all Quorums of the Church again being filled up, so that the revelations of God may be honored and we fulfill their requirements. Hence, the Council of the Apostles has taken into consideration this subject, and the question in our minds was, Have we sufficiently, as the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, magnified our office and calling, in setting in order the Church of the living God, in organizing the various Councils, or is there something lacking? Every time we thought upon the subject we saw that one Council, the most important of all, was still vacant. Could we ignore it? No. We therefore considered the propriety of organizing it at the present Conference; and Brother John Taylor, by the voice of his brethren, the Twelve, being the person holding the legal right to that office, as the President of the Twelve Apostles, was selected to occupy the position of the President of the whole Church. And he, according to the right and authority given to him, suggested his own Counselors. They were sanctioned by the Twelve Apostles; hence, the First Presidency again, so far as the Council of the Twelve is concerned, has been reorganized . . . .

After being sustained as President of the Church in the afternoon session of the conference on October 10, John Taylor then spoke:

... had I consulted my own personal feelings, I would have said, things are going on very pleasantly, smoothly and agreeably; and I have a number of good associates whom I respect and esteem, as my brethren, and I rejoice in their counsels. Let things remain as they are. But it is not for me to say, it is not for you to say, what we would individually prefer, but it is for us holding the Holy Priesthood; to see that all the organizations of that Priesthood are preserved intact, and that everything in the Church and Kingdom of God is organized according to the plan which He has revealed; therefore we have taken the course which you have been called upon to sanction by your votes today.

And now let me refer with pride to my brethren of the Twelve here, which I do by saying that while they as a quorum held the right by the vote of the people to act in the capacity of the First Presidency, yet when they found, as Brother Pratt expressed it this morning, that they had performed their work, they were willing to withdraw from that Presidency, and put it in the position that God had directed, and fall back into the place that they have always held, as the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints . . . . They saw the necessity of this action; a motion was made in that Council; and the vote was unanimously adopted that the First Presidency be re-organized, and afterwards the brethren to fill this quorum, were selected. The next step was to present the matter to the Church, and it was

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1Orson Pratt, Ibid. (October 10, 1890), XXII, 37.
laid before the Priesthood at a meeting, when there were present a representation of all the important authorities of the Church in the different Stakes in Zion. After having done that, lest some difficulty might exist some where, it was thought proper to pursue the course taken to-day—that each organization of the Priesthood, embracing all the quorums, should be seated in a quorum capacity by themselves, and separately have the opportunity of voting freely and fully without control of any kind, and of expressing their feelings, and finally, that the whole congregation should have the same opportunity. This is emphatically the voice of God, and the voice of the people; and this is the order that the Lord has instituted in Zion, as it was in former times among Israel . . . You have all done this by your votes; which vote, so far as we can learn, has been without a dissenting voice either among the separate quorums, or in the vote of the combined quorums and people. Now, continue to be united in everything as you are in this thing, and God will stand by you from this time henceforth and forever. And any man who opposes principles of this kind is an enemy of God, an enemy of the Church and kingdom of God upon the earth, an enemy to the people of God, and an enemy to the freedom and rights of man . . .

The procedure inaugurated at this conference, of voting by priesthood quorums to sustain a newly organized Presidency, has continued in the LDS Church to the present day.

The First Presidency, organized in October, 1880, directed the church until the death of John Taylor on July 25, 1887. Four days later, five of the Twelve Apostles, including the president of the Quorum, Wilford Woodruff, met with George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith, the counselors of the late President Taylor. It was decided that the two counselors of the deceased President should preside over the affairs of the church until a quorum of the Twelve could be convened. On August 3, 1887, eight of the Twelve met and the two counselors of President Taylor were reinstated to their former positions in the Quorum. It was also announced that the duties of presiding over the Church would again devolve upon the Twelve Apostles. This action was

1 John Taylor, Ibid. (October 10, 1880), XXII, 39-41.
sustained by the Church two months later in general conference.

The Church again remained under the direction of the Quorum of Twelve until April, 1889, when the First Presidency was organized for the third time since the death of Joseph Smith. Wilford Woodruff was chosen to be the fourth President of the church, selecting George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith as his counselors.

At a YMMIA conference held in Salt Lake City in June, 1889, President Woodruff remarked that he was the last man living who had heard the charge of the Prophet Joseph Smith to the Twelve shortly before his death, when he bestowed upon them all of the keys of the kingdom. President Woodruff then commented upon the subject:

When the Lord gave the keys of the Kingdom of God, the keys of the Melchisedek Priesthood, of the Apostleship, and sealed them upon the head of Joseph Smith, He sealed them upon his head to stay here upon the earth until the coming of the Son of Man. Well might Brigham Young say, 'The keys of the Kingdom of God are here.' They were with him to the day of his death. They then rested upon the head of another man--President John Taylor. He held those keys to the hour of his death. They then fell by turn, or in the providence of God, upon Wilford Woodruff.

I say to the Latter-day Saints the keys of the Kingdom of God are here, and they are going to stay here, too, until the coming of the Son of Man. Let all Israel understand that. They may not rest upon my head but a short time, but they will then rest on the head of another Apostle, and another after him, and so continue until the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ in the clouds of heaven to reward every man according to the deeds done in the body.'

I want to add another thing, because I feel it my duty to say it to the Latter-day Saints. There is a feeling--it was so in the days of Joseph Smith--that he was not the man to lead the Church. Even his bosom friends, men with whom he saw the angels of God, Oliver Cowdery and others, considered him a fallen Prophet and thought they ought to lead the Church. This history is before you and before the world. The same feeling was manifest in the days of Brigham Young when he was called to hold the keys of the Presidency of the Church. There were other men who thought they should be appointed to that office. But the God of heaven manifested to you, and to me, and to all men, who were in Nauvoo, upon whom the mantle had fallen. Brigham Young took his place, and led the Church and Kingdom of God up to the day of his death.

There are men today, there will be men till the coming of the
Son of man, I expect, who feel as though they ought to lead the Church, as though it is not going on right—that this, that, and the other is wrong. I say to all Israel at this day, I say to the whole world, that the God of Israel, who organized this Church and Kingdom, never ordained any President or Presidency to lead it astray. Hear it, ye Israel, no man who has ever breathed the breath of life can hold these keys of the Kingdom of God and lead the people astray.1

Shortly before his death, Wilford Woodruff announced that "... it was not the will of the Lord that in the future there should be a lengthy period elapse between the death of the president of the church and the reorganization of the first presidency."2 Therefore, eleven days after his demise on September 2, 1898, the president of the Quorum of Twelve—Lorenzo Snow—was chosen at a special meeting of that Quorum as the successor to Wilford Woodruff. This action was sustained by the church in the October general conference.

Lorenzo Snow directed the Church for a little over three years—his earthly ministry coming to a close three days after the October conference in 1901. On October 17, the Council of Twelve met and selected Joseph F. Smith as the President of the Church. A special conference of the church congregated in Salt Lake City on November 10 to ratify the newly appointed presidency. During this conference, the President commented on the matter of succession of authority as follows:

After the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the twelve apostles continued as the presiding quorum of the church for a number of years; but finally they were moved upon by the Holy Spirit to reorganize the first presidency of the church; with

1"The Keys of the Kingdom," The Contributor, August, 1889, pp. 330-34.

2Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 356.
Brigham Young as president, and Heber C. Kimball and Willard Richards as his counselors. In reality this organization might have been effected within twenty-four hours after the death of the Prophet Joseph Smith, but their action was delayed, until they found by experience that the exercise of the functions of presidency and the government of the church by twelve men at the head was not only cumbersome, but was not fully perfect in the order of the holy priesthood as established by the Lord.

On the death of President Brigham Young, President John Taylor followed in some measure the example of his predecessor, and it was some time before the presidency of the church was organized. At the death of President Taylor, President Woodruff hesitated, and he allowed a little time to pass before the presidency was again organized. When at last he became convinced that it was his duty, and necessary in order to carry out the purposes of the Lord, he reorganized the presidency of the church.

At that time he gave a solemn injunction to his fellow servants in relation to this. He desired it understood that in all future time, when the president of the church should die and thereby the first presidency become disorganized, it would be the duty of the proper authorities of the church to proceed at once without any unnecessary delay, to reorganize the first presidency.

As soon as the news reached us of the death of President Woodruff, who was in California at the time, President Lorenzo Snow said to me, 'It will be our duty to proceed as soon as possible to reorganize the presidency of the church.' As you are aware, after the burial of the remains of President Woodruff, he proceeded at once to do this. In this connection I may tell you another thing. President Snow said to me, 'you will live to be president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and when that time comes you should proceed at once and reorganize the presidency of the church.' This was his counsel to me, and the same was given to the twelve apostles. In accordance with this principle and with the injunction of President Snow, within one week after his death the apostles proceeded to designate the new presidency of the church, and we did it strictly in accordance with the pattern that the Lord has established in his church, unanimously.1

Joseph F. Smith served as president of the church for seventeen years, passing away on November 19, 1918. In accordance with the policy to organize the First Presidency promptly, the Quorum of Twelve met in the Temple on November 23, 1918, and nominated Heber J. Grant as the eighth president of the church. An influenza epidemic that was

1Ibid., VI, 386-97.
sweeping the United States at that time prevented the convening of a general conference of the church to ratify the appointment of the new president until June 1, 1919. On that day, the conference, voting first by priesthood quorums, and then the congregated saints en masse, unanimously sustained the previous action of the Twelve.

Following the presidency of Heber J. Grant, which lasted from November, 1918 until his death on May 14, 1945, George Albert Smith was appointed President of the Church at a meeting of the Twelve on May 21, 1945 and sustained at the following general conference. At the opening session of the conference on October 5, 1945, J. Reuben Clark was called upon to present the names of the general authorities, including the new President, for the sustaining vote of the church:

We are met here in the Tabernacle on Temple Square, Salt Lake City, in a formal Solemn Assembly of the body of the Church to express the voice of the Church in a first sustaining vote for a new President of the Church. This proceeding is in accordance with the practice of the Church from the first sustaining vote cast by a General Conference for President Taylor, until the present time.

The Priesthood of the Church, in so far as the building can accommodate them, is seated in the Tabernacle by Priesthood quorums.

The quorums and groups of quorums will vote in the following order:

1. The First Presidency.
2. The Quorum of the Twelve.
3. The Patriarchs.
4. The High Priests, including the Assistants to the Twelve, the presidents of stakes, and their counselors, the high council-men, presidencies of quorums, quorum members, the Presiding Bishopric, and ward bishoprics.
5. The Seventies.
6. The Elders.
8. The whole congregation here assembled including the priesthood.

The voting will be in the following manner:

As each quorum or group is called, they will be asked to vote to sustain the officer proposed: Those voting affirmatively will, when called upon, arise to their feet and bring their right arms
to the square to witness to the Lord that they sustain the officer for whom they are voting. They will then drop their hands. Then those opposing will be asked to bring their right hands to the square to bear witness to the Lord that they are not willing to sustain the officer whom they are called upon to sustain.

When both affirmative and negative votes are cast, the members of the quorum will resume their seats.

All of the quorums will vote in this manner.

Every one is perfectly free to vote as he wishes. There is not compulsion whatsoever in this voting. When you vote affirmatively you make a solemn covenant with the Lord that you will sustain, that is, give your full loyalty and support, without equivocation or reservation, to the officer for whom you vote.

After all the quorums have so voted, a vote will be called of the whole congregation, those bearing the priesthood and those not bearing it. All will arise. Those voting to sustain will raise their right hands to the square, to witness that they sustain the officers for whom they vote. After they lower their hands the opposing vote will be called for and will be manifested by raising the right hand to the square.

The officers so to be voted for by quorums are the following:
The President of the Church.
The First Counselor to the President of the Church.
The Second Counselor to the President of the Church.
The President of the Quorum of the Twelve.
The Council of the Twelve.
The Patriarch to the Church.
The sustaining of the Counselors in the Presidency, the Council of the Twelve, and the Patriarch as Prophets, Seers, and Revelators to the Church.

After the vote by quorums to sustain these officers, the rest of the General Authorities, the general officers of the Church, and the general auxiliary officers of the Church will be sustained by voting as in the ordinary General Conference. This is in accordance with the procedure set by President John Taylor.¹

Two days prior to the April conference of the church in 1951, George Albert Smith died. The conference convened on April 6, under the direction of David O. McKay—the President of the Twelve; and two days later the Twelve met and sustained him as President of the Church. This action was ratified at the final session of the conference on April 9. As at the organization of the preceding presidency of the

¹Conference Reports of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1880--), October, 1945, pp. 3-5. (Hereafter referred to as Conference Report.)
Church, J. Reuben Clark was called to conduct the matter of sustaining the general authorities. He commenced by saying: "... we shall follow the exact proceedings that were followed in connection with the installation of President George Albert Smith. The same script will be used except for the necessary changes in names." The voting then proceeded as outlined, and David O. McKay was sustained as the ninth President of the church since the days of Joseph Smith.

A review of Latter-day Saint Church history has shown that definite provision was made in the time of Joseph Smith for the succession of authority which he held, and from his time to the present day there has been no deviation from that procedure.

... the keys of the kingdom of God and of the Holy Melchizedek Priesthood are vested in the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Beginning with the Prophet Joseph Smith and continuing on through his successors, each President of the Church has received the same keys and authority down to the present time. Thus all the keys pertaining to priesthood and the ordinances performed therein, and the functioning of all the organizations of the Church of Jesus Christ pertinent to the growth and building of the kingdom of God and the saving of souls are held by the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.2

1Ibid., April, 1951, p. 136.

CHAPTER IV

THE SUCCESSION OF AUTHORITY FROM JOSEPH SMITH--
AN EVALUATION

... How many are there at the present time ... who are not suited with the way the Church has been and is led, because there is not that wonderful degree of power exhibited which they imagine should be?

Apostates have asserted that there was not the power in the leaders of the Church which there should be. They said so during the life of the Prophet Joseph, asserting that he was a fallen prophet. After his death they made the same statements respecting President Young, his counselors, and the Twelve Apostles. And, if I am not mistaken, there are some members of the Church who have manifested a feeling of restlessness, anticipating the rising of some one who should have greater authority than at present exists. While I would not wish to detract from the reasonable expectations of my brethren and sisters upon this or any other point, my view is that the apostleship, now held in this Church, embodies all the authority bestowed by the Lord upon man in the flesh ... .1

The "Muser" group and "Church of the Firstborn" concepts of authority presented in Chapter II both rest upon the premise that the LDS Church has degenerated from its pristine purity; and that part of the divine authority conferred upon the Prophet Joseph Smith was secretly vested in a special "high priesthood" organization, operating independent of the church, which has carefully preserved and perpetuated the original deposit of Mormonism to the present day. More specifically, their position is characterized by the following points:

A. A segment of the Melchizedek Priesthood has always

functioned on the earth in a special organization, above and entirely independent of the church.¹

B. Although the church may excommunicate a man for infraction of the rules thereof, "... his Priesthood cannot be disturbed."²

C. The keys of the priesthood were not all restored to the Prophet Joseph Smith.³

D. After the death of Joseph and Hyrum, "the Lord in his wisdom saw fit to conceal the true succession of authority."⁴

E. When the church is in order, the Presiding Patriarch presides over the President thereof—being higher in priesthood authority.⁵

F. The First Presidency hold a higher office and more authority than the Twelve, and consequently the Twelve do not have the authority to reorganize the First Presidency.⁶

G. Brigham Young "did not hold or claim to hold" all the authority bestowed upon Joseph Smith.⁷

H. To say that the President of the Twelve succeeds to the position of President of the church, when the quorum of First Presidency becomes disorganized, is an error.⁸

I. There has been much dissention among the Latter-day Saints concerning the succession of authority from Joseph Smith to the present time.⁹

¹ Supra, p. 5-43. ² Supra, p. 19.
³ Supra, p. 33. ⁴ Supra, pp. 21, 37-38.
⁵ Supra, pp. 16-17, 24-25 ⁶ Supra, pp. 10, 39-40.
⁹ Supra. MP LeBaron, Priesthood Expounded, p. 7
J. Someone with higher authority has been sent to enlighten the church and set it in order.1

To assume that the authority bestowed upon Joseph Smith was perpetuated independent of and unknown to the Church is to apply a unique interpretation to LDS church history.

That the Saints need not look to a "high independent priesthood" or to the recipient of some "secret ordination," for leadership had been definitely established in a revelation to the Church on February 9, 1831, in which it was declared, "... that it shall not be given to anyone to go forth to preach my gospel or to build up my church, except he be ordained by someone who has authority, and it is known to the church that he has authority..."2 George Q. Cannon later noted that the succession of authority had been revealed with such plainness to the Latter-day Saints that "... a way-faring man, though a fool, need not err therein..."3 Even a superficial reading of church history will bear this out.

A revelation on priesthood given in 1835 begins with the statement, "there are in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical..."4 Of the Melchizedek

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1Supra, p. 42. 2Doctrine and Covenants 43:11.


4Doctrine and Covenants 107:1. Although the proponents of the "high priesthood" interpret parts of sections 84 and 107 in support of their position, the statement in section 107:1, that "there are in the church two priesthoods," and the reference in section 84:11, that the holy priesthood "continueth in the church of God in all generations," emphasize the fallacy of this interpretation. Oliver Cowdery's observation, that the Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthoods "... are now, and must continue to be in the body of the Church of Jesus Christ of
priesthood, Joseph Smith said, it "... is the grand head, and holds the highest authority which pertains to the Priesthood, and the keys of the kingdom of God in all ages of the world to the latest posterity on the earth... ."1

According to LDS Church history, when the first Quorum of Twelve was chosen in 1835, its members were ordained to the office of Apostle in the Melchizedek priesthood. Of this office Joseph Smith noted that "... the man who receives the Apostleship receives all the keys that ever were, or that can be conferred upon mortal man... ."2 It was subsequently revealed that the Twelve "... form a quorum equal in power and authority" to the First Presidency of the Church and "... are not subject to any other than the First Presidency... ."3 The position of the Twelve was further clarified in 1841 when Joseph announced that "... the time had come when the Twelve should... stand in their place next to the first Presidency... ."4

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Latter-day Saints," (Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, I, 42.) is also significant, especially since Oliver is hailed as a recipient of the "high independent priesthood." (Supra, pp. 7, 36.)

1Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, IV, 207.

2Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (April 6, 1853), I, 137. Brigham Young also said: "... the High Priesthood, and the Lesser Priesthood, and all the Priesthood there is, are combined, centered in, composed of, and circumscribed by, the Apostleship... . All the Priesthood, all the keys, all the gifts, all the endowments, and everything preparatory to entering into the presence of the Father and the Son, are in, composed of, circumscribed by, or I might say incorporated within the circumference of, the Apostleship." (Ibid., pp. 134-35.)

3Doctrine and Covenants 107:24; Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, II, 373-74. Supra, p 52.

4Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, IV, 403. Supra, p 52.
Having received, as noted above, "... all the keys that ever were, or that can be conferred upon mortal man,"¹ the Prophet Joseph Smith, prior to his martyrdom, conferred that authority upon the Twelve apostles:

"Now if they kill me, you have all the keys, and all the ordinances, and you can confer them upon others, and the hosts of Satan will not be able to tear down the kingdom as fast as you will be able to build it up and upon your shoulders will the responsibility of leading this people rest."²

After the death of Joseph and Hyrum, at the time when the greatest doubt arose as to who should lead the Church, Brigham Young, the President of the Quorum of Twelve, asserted, "... without a Prophet at our head ... I step forth to act in my calling in connection with the Quorum of the Twelve, as Apostles of Jesus Christ unto this generation ... called by revelation through the Prophet

¹ Supra, pp. 60, 74.

² Times and Seasons, September 15, 1844, p. 651. On this point George Q. Cannon testified that Joseph "... bestowed upon the Twelve Apostles all the keys of authority and power that he himself possessed and that he had received from the Lord ... There was no key that he held, there was no authority that he exercised that he did not bestow upon the Twelve Apostles at that time." (Journal of Discourses (October 29, 1882), XXXIII, 362-63.) Wilford Woodruff stated that Joseph gave the Twelve "... all the blessings ... that were ever given to the Apostles or Prophets on the face of the earth ...." (Supra, pp. 53.) And on another occasion he noted that "... several men have claimed authority to lead the Church, but the Prophet Joseph never conferred any such authority upon any man. The keys of the Presidency after his death were held by the Twelve Apostles, and by them only, until the Council of the First Presidency was reorganized." (Deseret News Weekly, March 19, 1892, p. 407.) On another occasion Brigham Young asserted, "Joseph conferred upon our heads all the keys and powers belonging to the Apostleship which he himself held before he was taken away, and no man or set of men can get between Joseph and the Twelve in this world or in the world to come." (Supra, p. 55. Orson Pratt also stated, "... We have been taught, ever since the Twelve were chosen, that they held all the power of the Apostleship that could be conferred upon mortal man ... ." (Supra, p. 60.)
Joseph . . . to bear off the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world."¹ Shortly afterward President Young stated that ". . . the Quorum of the Twelve have the keys of the kingdom of God in all the world . . . . They stand next to Joseph, and are as the First Presidency of the Church." And further:

... You must not appoint any man at our head; if you should, the Twelve must ordain him . . . . You saints of latter-days want things right. If 10,000 men rise up and say they have the Prophet Joseph Smith's shoes, I know they are imposters . . . . I tell you in the name of the Lord that no man can put another between the Twelve and the Prophet Joseph. Why? Because Joseph . . . has committed into their hands the keys of the Kingdom in this last dispensation . . . . I will ask, who has stood next to Joseph and Hyrum? I have, and I will stand next to him. We have a head, and that head is the Apostleship . . . .²

That the Twelve did not need a special ordination to exercise all the authority of the apostleship which had been bestowed upon them by Joseph Smith, is well documented:

¹Supra, p. 55.

²Supra, p. 56. Heber C. Kimball also attested to the authority bestowed upon Brigham Young, stating that he held ". . . the same authority that brother Joseph had. That authority was in the Twelve, and since brother Joseph stepped behind the veil, brother Brigham is his lawful successor." (Supra, p. 60.)

A statement by Patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson concerning the authority given to Brigham Young is also noteworthy in light of the position Johnson allegedly played in the succession of authority as set forth by the Church of the Firstborn. It is asserted that according to Johnson, the Twelve received ". . . neither the office Joseph held, nor the office Hyrum held, nor the authority of the First Presidency . . . ." (Ervil M. LeBaron, Priesthood Expounded, p. 42.) However, in the letter of Benjamin Johnson from which the foregoing assertion is derived, the following statement is recorded: "Of Brigham Young as President of the Church, I will again bear this as a faithful testimony that I do know and bear record that upon the head of Brigham Young as chief, with the Apostleship in full, was by the voice of the Prophet Joseph, in my hearing, laid the full responsibility of bearing off the kingdom of God to all the world . . . ." (See "Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs," Brigham Young University Library, Provo, Utah.)
... it is not necessary that an Apostle should be ordained to stand at the head of the people. When the exigency arises, he has already got the fulness of authority, and the power of it. I was told of a dream that a person had shortly after the death of the Prophet. A person dreamed that a certain man had been set apart by the President, and the keys had been given him; and that President Young came and said that he had given to this person the keys. Now, that of itself, to a person understanding the principle, would carry its own contradiction with it. The man dreamed of was already an Apostle, holding and exercising the keys of the Apostleship; and therefore it would not be necessary for President Young to confer again upon him the keys. If every man of the Twelve but one were slain, the one remaining would have the right to organize a First Presidency of the Church, to choose Twelve Apostles, and to organize the Church in its fulness and power, and to preside over it. And his acts would be accepted of the Lord, and binding upon the people. This is the authority of the Apostleship...

The position of the President of the Twelve as the rightful successor to the President of the Church was clarified by Wilford Woodruff when asked on one occasion, "Do you know of any reason in case of the death of the President of the Church why the Twelve Apostles should not choose some other person than the President of the Twelve to be the President of the Church?"

I know of several reasons why they should not. First, at the death of the President of the Church the Twelve Apostles become the presiding authority of the Church, and the president of the Twelve is really the President of the Church by virtue of his office as much while presiding over the Twelve Apostles as while presiding over his two counselors... Second, in case of the death of the President of the Church it takes a majority of the Twelve Apostles to appoint the President of the Church, and it is very unreasonable to suppose that the majority of that quorum could be converted to depart from the course marked out by inspiration and followed by the Apostles at the death of Christ and by the Twelve Apostles at the death of Joseph Smith.  

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2Cited in Matthias F. Cowley (compiler), Wilford Woodruff (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1909), p. 561. (Consult also, supra, pp. 61-63.)
Although "Fundamentalist" concepts of the "high priesthood" vary considerably in detail, they agree in assigning the position of prominence in the Latter-day Saint Church to the Presiding Patriarch. The precedent for this is derived from the *Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 124.\(^1\) That the revelation does not lend itself to this interpretation, however, is seen from the fact that each Presiding Patriarch has been ordained to his position by the President of the Church or the Quorum of Twelve.\(^2\)

The position of the Patriarch in relation to the First Presidency was clarified in 1845 following an editorial written by W. W. Phelps which appeared in the May 15 issue of the *Times and Seasons*. At that time, William Smith had been ordained Presiding Patriarch as the successor to his brother Hyrum; and W. W. Phelps, the junior editor of the paper, sought to clarify a few points in regard to the patriarchal office.

The office of Patriarch over the whole church is to be a father to the church, and to confer blessings on its members, according to the order handed down from the first of Patriarchs to the present. By some of these, great and most marvelous events have been predicted which have received their fulfilment after many generations have passed away; for instance, Jacob blessing his son Joseph. Moses blessing the tribes of Israel, &c.

\[\ldots\] 
\[\ldots\] in order to carry out the pattern of scripture, one of the chosen seed, and he the eldest, is set apart to bless all

\(^1\)Consult supra, pp. 16-17, 36.

\(^2\)Hyrum Smith was ordained presiding patriarch to the Church on January 23, 1841, by the Prophet Joseph Smith. William Smith succeeded his brother Hyrum and was ordained by the Quorum of Twelve which was the presiding authority of the church at that time. John Smith, the successor to William, had been ordained to the patriarchal office in 1844 by Joseph Smith and was subsequently set apart as presiding patriarch on January 1, 1849, under the hands of Brigham Young and Heber C. Kimball.
and such as have not a father living to do it. He is called
the patriarch of the whole church: such was our father Adam;
such was Abraham; such was Jacob; such was Joseph Smith, Sen.;
such was Hyrum Smith, and such is William Smith now—inheriting
the right by lineage.¹

The reference to the Patriarch as being "over" the whole church was misinterpreted by a few to mean that the Patriarch is the highest office in the church—higher than the First Presidency. This question was settled, however, in the next issue of the Times and Seasons. John Taylor, the editor, in referring to the previous issue, stated that

... so far as the editorial is concerned it was written rather hastily by our junior editor, W. W. Phelps, and did not come under our notice until after it was published. There are some expressions contained in it, which might have been worded better and have rendered it less subject to criticism; but he assures us that no such intention was intended to be conveyed as that which is conceived by some . . . .

John Taylor then proceeded to answer some of the questions that had arisen:

We have been asked, 'Does not the patriarch over the whole church' place Brother William Smith at the head of the whole church as President?
Ans. No. Brother William is not patriarch over the whole church; but patriarch to the church, and as such he was ordained. The expression 'over the whole church,' is a mistake made by W. W. Phelps. He is patriarch to the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Twelve are commanded to ordain evangelical ministers in all large branches of the church abroad, and who has charge over them, the patriarch? No. Those who ordained them, and to whom is committed the power and authority to regulate all the affairs of the churches abroad. And who has charge of the whole priesthood here? Ans. The presidency of the church; and not the patriarch.

But does not the Book of Doctrine and Covenants say,
'First, I give unto you Hyrum Smith to be a Patriarch unto you to hold the sealing blessings of my church, even the Holy Spirit of promise whereby ye are sealed up unto the day of re-

demption, that ye may not fall.'

¹Times and Seasons, May 15, 1845, pp. 904-906.
Yes. But that is in regard to seniority, not in regard to authority in priesthood, for it immediately follows, 'I give unto you my servant Joseph to be a presiding elder over all my church.' In page 110 D.C. we read 'the duty of the president of the office of the high priesthood, is to preside over the whole church, and to be like unto Moses.' And from this it is evident that the president of the church, not the patriarch, is appointed by God to preside.

But does not the Patriarch stand in the same relationship to the church, as Adam did to his family, and as Abraham and Jacob did to theirs? No. This is another mistake which is made by our junior, and one that may be very easily made inadvertently. Adam was the natural father of his posterity, who were his family and over whom he presided as patriarch, prophet, priest, and king. Both Abraham and Jacob stood in the same relationship to their families. But not so with Father Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, or William Smith. They were not the natural fathers of the church, and could not stand in the same capacity as Adam, Abraham, or Jacob; but inasmuch as there had been none to bless for generations past, according to the ancient order, they were ordained and set apart for the purpose of conferring patriarchal blessings, to hold the keys of this priesthood, and unlock the door, that had long been closed upon the human family: that blessings might again be conferred according to the ancient order, and those who were orphans, or had no father to bless them, might receive it through a patriarch who should act as proxy for their father, and that fathers might again be enabled to act as patriarchs to their families, and bless their children, for like all other ordinances in the church, this had been neglected; and must needs be restored. But Father Joseph Smith was not president of the church, nor the president's Counsel. Nor was Hyrum Smith either president or president's counsel. He was once counsel but when he was ordained patriarch he gave it up and another was ordained in his stead. (Wm. Law) and in all probability if Br. William magnifies his calling he will not be able henceforth to attend to the duties of an apostle; but officiate in the same capacity in regard to blessing as his brother Hyrum did. Not as president of the church; but as Patriarch to it.

The president of the church presides over all patriarchs, presidents, and councils of the church; and this presidency does not depend so much upon genealogy as upon calling, order, and seniority. James and Joses were the brothers of Jesus, and John was his beloved disciple, yet Peter held the keys and presided over all the church. Br. William was in the Quorum of the Twelve yet he was not president of the Twelve during his brother's lifetime, nor since; and if being ordained a patriarch would make him president of the church, it would have made Father Joseph Smith and Hyrum Smith presidents over the church instead of Joseph.

Br. William understands the matter, and were it not for the folly of some men there would be no necessity for these remarks.

A Patriarch is what is termed in scripture an evangelist, and Br. William acts in that capacity, and God placed in the church 'first apostles,' not first evangelists, but the president stands
in the same relationship to the church as Moses did to the children of Israel, according to the revelations.

Again, who ordained Father Smith to the office of patriarch? His son Joseph; and Father Smith ordained Hyrum, and the Twelve (of whom Br. William is one) ordained him. --Who are appointed to ordain evangelical ministers? (See D&C 104 D.C.) Can a stream rise higher than its fountain? No. Says Paul, 'verily the less is blessed of the better.'

The fallacy of the position that the Presiding Patriarch is above the First Presidency and that an apostle in the LDS Church does not have the necessary authority to ordain a presiding patriarch, is further verified in a statement by Orson Pratt:

... We have been taught, ever since the Twelve were chosen, that they held all the power of the Melchizedek Priesthood, all the power of the Apostleship that could be conferred upon mortal man. Hence, when Hyrum Smith was taken out of the First Presidency and appointed to another calling, not to another office in the Apostleship, was it not the province of the Twelve to set him apart? It was, because they held that authority, that Priesthood, that Apostleship, that gave him the right to do this. By what revelation you may ask? I answer, by a certain revelation contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, where it says that the Twelve shall ordain in all large Branches of the Church, evangelical ministers. Hence the Twelve have so ordained patriarchs, as Hyrum Smith. But inquires one, should the Twelve ordain Prophets, Seers and Revelators? Yes, were they not appointed in the Kirtland Temple, in the year 1836, after its dedication by the voice of Joseph, and the First Presidency, and the united voice of the Church to be Prophets, Seers and Revelators to the people? Yes. Then they could ordain such; or in other words they could set apart such to these duties. They could set apart Patriarchs, to such an office as brother Hyrum Smith held, when he was taken out of the First Presidency and placed in the Patriarchal office.

1Ibid., June 1, 1845, pp. 920-22. This statement is significant not only from the fact that it clarifies the meaning of the Doctrine and Covenants 124:124, but also from the fact that John Taylor, who is esteemed by the "Masser Fundamentalists" as President of the "High Priesthood," uses the terms "President of the Church," and "President of the High Priesthood," synonymously. (Consult supra, pp. 9, 19.) His views on the office of Patriarch are also significant inasmuch as he was one of the supposed witnesses of the conferral of the "office of Grand Patriarch" upon John Smith, as claimed by the "Church of the Firstborn." (See Supra, p. 37.)

2Orson Pratt, Journal of Discourses (October 5, 1877), XIX, 114.
Enough has been said in LDS history on the subject of the succession of authority to indicate that the "high priesthood" position may be supported only if one ignores many of the statements of the church leaders—including Joseph Smith.

The "high priesthood" thesis is not only unsupported by Latter-day Saint Church history, but a review of the evidence reveals that it rests upon a very special interpretation of that history. The expounders of "Fundamentalist" and "Firstborn" doctrine both quote Latter-day Saint scripture and history in their efforts to trace the true succession of authority. However, in both cases the material quoted does not naturally lead to the proposed conclusions unless a special commentary is provided to give the evidence its "true" meaning.

For example, the case for the "Musser" group is upheld by the following reasoning: Since neither Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, nor David Whitmer became members of the original Quorum of Twelve organized in February, 1835, they "certainly" held a higher order of Apostleship than that exercised by the Twelve in the Church.¹ The six elders mentioned in the first verse of the 84th section of the Doctrine and Covenants "doubtless" held this same high apostolic office.² The meeting of the First Presidency, Bishop Newel K. Whitney and "three elders" with nine of the Twelve in February, 1835, "doubtless" refers to a council meeting of this same group.³ The mention of the "First elders" in the journal entry of the Prophet Joseph Smith on October 5, 1835, again "doubtless" has reference to this special "high priesthood."⁴

¹Supra, p. 7.  ²Supra, p. 9.  ³Supra, p. 11.  ⁴Supra, p. 11.
The eight brethren referred to as "President" who met in a "solemn assembly" in March, 1836, during which the foot washing ceremony was inaugurated in this dispensation, is another "doubtless" example of the high priesthood operating independent of the Church.\(^1\) The appointment of four assistant counselors—Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith, Senior, Hyrum Smith, and John Smith—by the Prophet in 1837 "... must be considered in a broader light than merely adding extra help to the appendage office of First Presidency ..."\(^2\) And the further selection, by Brigham Young in 1873, of five additional counselors could not be as affirmed in church history "... owing to the infirmities incident to old age ..." but, on the contrary, "... 'undoubtedly' referred to some other 'capacity' than that of the First Presidency ..."\(^3\) On May 26, 1843 when the Prophet met with Hyrum Smith, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, James Adams, Newel K. Whitney and William Law, giving them "... the keys of the priesthood, the same that he himself held," we are asked, "... could language be employed to more clearly sustain the idea of the existence of a Priesthood group above the office of the First Presidency of the Church ...?"\(^4\)

The position of the "Church of the Firstborn" is based upon the same type of "evidence" as that of the "Musser" group:

From the seventh chapter of Hebrews, three grand orders of priesthood are noted—the Melchizedek, the Aaronic, and the Levitical.

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1 Supra, p. 12.
2 Supra, p. 14
3 Supra, p. 14
These are not, however, the Melchizedek, Aaronic, or Levitical priest-
hoods as commonly understood in the literature of the church, but are
special orders of a higher priesthood which function independent of
the church. The problem here is that these special orders of priest-
hood are not discernable unless they are carefully interpreted as such.

For example, after quoting a statement of the Lord recorded in
the seventh section of the Doctrine and Covenants that, "... my be-
loved [John] has desired that he might do more, or a greater work yet
among men than he has before done . . . ," we are informed that this
is "clear" evidence that John the Beloved remained on the earth to
hold the highest office of the priesthood--the Right of the Firstborn.1

From the account of the appearance of Elias in the Kirtland Temple
on April 3, 1836, it is reasoned that since the authority he restored
could not have been lesser than that conferred by John the Baptist
and Peter James, and John, it therefore, "could have been nothing
other" than the "Right of the Firstborn."2 The account of the visit
of John Smith to the Carthage jail on June 26, 1844 is also cited,
during which, it is claimed, Hyrum Smith bestowed upon his uncle the
"office of the Grand Patriarch."3 This is particularly noteworthy since
there is nothing in the record to suggest any such transferal of
authority.4

1 Supra, p. 32.
2 Supra, p. 35.
3 Supra, p. 37.
4 In claiming that the First Presidency of the Church was re-
organized in 1847 under the supervision of Patriarch John Smith,
(Supra, p. 39.) the Church of the Firstborn fails to note that at the
time of the reorganization referred to, which took place on the plains
at Kanesville, Iowa, John Smith was presiding over the colony of Saints
in Salt Lake valley. (Consult, Roberts, Comprehensive History of the
Church, III, 293-94.)
The above instances indicate that only after a process of selection and interpretation is the "Fundamentalist" concept of succession of authority upheld. The foregoing references, cited from Latter-day Saint Church history, furnish "doubtless" proof of the existence of a "high priesthood" organization operating independent of the Church only if interpreted in a very special sense. Consequently, if authority to practice plural marriage today rests upon the foregoing "evidence," it must be concluded that monogamy is the only authorized order of marriage among the followers of Joseph Smith.

In minimizing the power and authority of the Latter-day Saint Church leadership, "Fundamentalists" are correct in tracing the precedent for their views to the time of Joseph Smith; however, they fail to note that such a position was always associated with the apostate element.

Joseph Smith once said:

I will give you one of the Keys of the mysteries of the Kingdom. It is an eternal principle, that has existed with God from all eternity; That man who rises up to condemn others, finding fault with the Church, saying that they are out of the way, while he himself is righteous, then know assuredly, that that man is in the high road to apostasy; and if he does not repent, will apostatize, as God lives . . . .

In 1879, George Q. Cannon, who is revered by "Fundamentalists" for the undeviating part he played in the perpetuation of "fundamental"

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1Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, III, 335. Heber C. Kimball verified this statement in 1856: "I will give you a key which brother Joseph Smith used to give in Nauvoo. He said that the very step of apostasy commenced with losing confidence in the leaders of this church and kingdom, and whenever you discerned that spirit you might know that it would lead the possessor of it on the road to apostasy . . . ." ("Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," March 23, 1856, p. 5.)
Nornoman,¹ observed that there were people in the church of his day who ". . . asserted that there was not the power in the leaders of the Church which there should be . . . ." He continued:

... They said so during the life of the Prophet Joseph, asserting that he was a fallen prophet. After his death they made the same statements respecting President Young, his counselors, and the Twelve Apostles. And, if I am not mistaken, there are some members of the Church who have appeared to think that there has been some power lacking, and have manifested a feeling of restlessness, anticipating the rising of some one who should have greater authority than at present exists. While I would not wish to detract from the reasonable expectations of my brethren and sisters upon this or any other point, my view is that the apostleship, now held in this Church, embodies all the authority bestowed by the Lord upon man in the flesh . . . . The Lord has given unto his people and to his church every gift and every qualification and every key which is necessary to lead this people into the celestial kingdom of our father and our God. There is nothing wanting. When the Lord restored the Apostleship to the earth he restored all the power that was possible for a human being to hold in the flesh. When he restored the keys of the holy priesthood unto his servant Joseph, when he gave unto him the sealing powers, when he gave unto him the endowments and the keys of the holy priesthood associated therewith, when the Prophet Joseph received the keys from Elijah, and from all the prophets that had existed upon the earth from the beginning down--each one, as he says himself in one of his epistles--each one in his dispensation coming forward and bestowing upon him the authority pertaining thereto, there was embodied in him all the priesthood they held, and he bestowed upon his fellow Apostles all the priesthood he exercised and all the power and authority bestowed upon mortal man to exercise here upon the earth . . . . Now, there was nothing lacking, and there was no power, there was no gift, there was not authority, there were no keys lacking, and these keys have been handed down through him. Others may have claimed to have had them. We have had Strang, John B. Page, William Smith, Gladden Bishop, and a host of others; each has claimed to have received that authority, either through Joseph Smith or from some other source. Some have claimed that Joseph was a fallen prophet; and some have set up one claim and some another. But the fact remains that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, as it is organized in these mountains, has had the apostleship; that the men who have stood at our head, President Young and the Twelve Apostles, whose President at the death of the Prophet Joseph he was, actually received under the hands of the Prophet Joseph, every key, and power, and authority that he himself possessed, and that they actually did take hold and complete the temple he

started, and endowed their fellow servants therein with the same authority and the same priestly and kingly dignity that they had received from under his hands. And from that time to the present this work has gone forth with might and power, and the power of God has attended the labors of his servants who have been sent forth by these apostles . . . although men may say there has been no supernatural manifestation of power, such as some suppose ought to attend this work. This work has gone forth with a rapidity and impetus that has been irresistible, and there is no power about to stand against it. It has gone forward to the fulfillment of all that has been spoken thus far concerning it, that is as far as we have gone. And the people have received the Holy Ghost, they have been filled with it, they have been filled with the spirit of revelation. The same spirit of revelation that Moses had, concerning which God speaks through the Prophet Joseph Smith, has rested upon men that have held the keys of this kingdom, whether it was during President Young's life or at the present time—that same spirit of revelation rests upon him who holds the presidency as senior apostle in the midst of the people of God. The apostles of this Church have all the authority, they have all the keys, and it is within the purview of their office and calling to have all the spirit of revelation necessary to lead this people into the presence of the Lamb in the celestial kingdom of our God.

I have desired to say this much, because I have felt at times there was a feeling among some people that there was not that manifestation of power, neither was there that authority wielded by the men who preside over this Church and kingdom that should be.

. . . We have, as I have said, all that is necessary, and we have this spirit of which I have spoken and which is alluded to in this revelation—the same spirit of revelation which reveals to us that which we should do and the course we should take in order to please the Lord and in order to build up his kingdom, and this Church will always be led by that authority from this time henceforth until Christ himself shall come to preside over us and be our king.\(^1\)

Three years after this speech, Cannon again remarked that there was a feeling manifest that the leaders of the church lacked some of the authority given to Joseph Smith, "... the feeling that some great one has to arise in our midst in order to revive the old power and restore it to the Church, and to perform the mighty works that God

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\(^1\)George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses* (November 2, 1879), XXI, 263-72.
has promised shall be performed in connection with His Zion in the
last days . . . ." He noted that this feeling was not new—that it
prevailed in the days of Joseph Smith in the form of J. J. Strang,
Sidney Rigdon et al. He then said,

... all these influences combined together have had the
effect, to a greater or less extent, to create in many minds
the impression of which I speak—that there was some withholding
of power; that there were some gifts and manifestations of
power that ought to be, but were not in the Church; that the
prophetic gifts did not follow to the same extent that God de-
signed they should . . . .

Now, how far these ideas have prevailed and are held I cannot
say . . . But I wish to say that those who look for some in-
creased manifestation of power to come in some form outside of
that which we recognize as the governing authority of the Church,
are in danger of being deluded and of being led astray. Such
persons, if there be any, and I am inclined to believe there are,
are in just the condition that the adversary would like people
to be in, that he may have influence with them.

... Many revelations have been sent to me by persons who
claim the right to preside over the Church and to be the Prophet
of the Church. President Taylor has been the recipient of a
number of similar communications, each one setting forth his
claim to the presidency of the Church, and to the prophetic
office; and some of them requiring us to accept the author as the
person whom God has designated to be the revelator to and the
President of the Church. Where there is a feeling to look for
some authority outside of our present organization of the holy
Priesthood, you can readily see how the adversary could take ad-
vantage of it, and puff vain, weak men up with the idea that
they are to be some great ones. No greater mistake can be in-
dulged in than for any person to suppose that there is not that
authority in the Church at the present time that is necessary for
the establishment, for the government and guidance, and for the
building up and complete control of the Church and kingdom of our
God upon the earth, according to the pattern which He has given.1

On another occasion George Q. Cannon again related the efforts
of the enemies of the Church to sap its foundation, that it might
cease to increase in the earth, among whom were those "who have been
numbered with us . . . who professed to have received a knowledge of

1George Q. Cannon, Ibid. (October 29, 1882), XXIII, 357-59.
the truth as we have received it." He proceeded:

... it has been something that has been exceedingly pain-
ful to me to see those who formerly called themselves our
brethren opposing the Work of God with all the envenomed hatred
that you could imagine an evil spirit to be possessed of, seeking
the lives of those men whom they formerly called brethren and
associated with on terms of friendship. Every species of slander
has been circulated by them, and they not only have sought to lay
plans for the overthrow of the Work of God, but they have sought
to disseminate erroneous views to destroy in the minds of the
people confidence in the authority of those whom God has called
to stand at the head of his Church. This list of enemies is a
very long one, and they have not been idle; they have arisen one
by one, time after time, and have sought with all the ability
they possessed to destroy the Work of God. But there is an
assurance which those who are living their religion have, and
which they ever have had from the beginning until the present
time—an assurance of which men cannot deprive us, that God our
heavenly Father has decreed that His Work shall stand, and that
those who have received his Holy Priesthood, and are endeavoring
to magnify the same shall be borne off triumphantly over every
opposing obstacle ....

I have heard, at various times, a great many talk about the
difference between the Church now and the days of the Prophet
Joseph. There is a class of people who seem to delight continu-
ally in dwelling upon the glory and happiness of the past. While
I love to dwell upon the past, to reflect upon past scenes and
associations and past teachings, and draw lessons therefrom,
there is, nevertheless, to my mind, as much happiness, to be en-
joyed now in the contemplation of the Kingdom of God .... I
can see that this people have progressed, and that the Authori-
eties of this Church have progressed from that time until the
present; I can see that there has been no stand still with them
nor with the Work of God with which they are identified ....
There has been a mental and a spiritual growth that has given
me an assurance that they are continually advancing in the
direction of the celestial Kingdom of God our Father, and I know
there is a greater degree of faith in the midst of this people
today than in the days of Joseph. I can see it when I visit the
Wards. I see a spirit of obedience manifested by the people to
the Bishops that was not manifested in the days of Joseph even to
him, himself, as the Prophet of God ....

Joseph F. Smith, another who has been included in the camp of
the "high priesthood," postulated, on one occasion, whether a person
who loses confidence in the leaders of the church, has the right to

set himself up as a judge of the whole church?

... If one were to get in a position of this kind he would be like some others I have heard of... some of whom are still living, and many others, both living and dead. Do you think you could convince those of this class that they had apostatized or turned away from the Church? No; these men are firmly convinced in their own minds that they never apostatized. They stoutly and indignantly deny that they ever apostatized or turned away from the Church, but say that Joseph Smith and the Twelve Apostles apostatized, and all the Church had apostatized and become very wicked, and that God has cut the Church off.... If I were to raise my hand against my Bishop, against the Twelve or the First Presidency, because I did not like them, that moment I should place myself in the position that these men now occupy, and that scores of others who have passed away have occupied, and say: 'The Church has apostatized, Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, and John Taylor have apostatized, but I am firm in the faith; all the people have gone astray because they will not acknowledge me.' There is where the man is who rebels against the authority of the Priesthood, and at the same time endeavors to hold on to the faith....

The moment a man says he will not submit to legally constituted authority of the Church, whether it be the Teachers, the Bishopric, the High Council, his Quorum or the First Presidency, and in his heart confirms it and carries it out, that moment he cuts himself off from the privileges and blessings of the Priesthood and Church, and severs himself from the people of God, for he ignores the authority that He has instituted in His Church. These are the men that generally get crochets in their heads, that get inspiration from beneath and that are often so desirous to guide the Church, and to sit in judgment upon the Priesthood....

Latter-day Saint Church history reveals that so many would-be "successors" of the Prophet Joseph Smith have arisen in the past 130 years proclaiming that the church leaders have erred and that the Lord has raised up a man by a special manifestation of authority to preside over the church, that for someone to advocate the same today is merely revealing a willful disregard for, or a profound ignorance of, the facts. George Q. Cannon noted in 1879, that should the time ever come when the Lord should raise a man by special manifestations

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1Joseph F. Smith, Ibid. (June 1, 1883), XXIV, 189-93.
of power to lead the church,

... it will not be made plain through a Seventy, it will not be made plain through a High Priest, through an Elder, through a Patriarch; it will come as all revelations from the Lord come, to be binding upon this people, through the voice of him whom the Lord chooses to be his voice, sanctioned by the Twelve Apostles. Hear it, O Israel! and remember it... ¹

¹George Q. Cannon, Ibid. (October 8, 1877), XIX, 236.
CHAPTER V

THE PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE--THE "FUNDAMENTALIST" VIEW

... And so with this order of marriage [plural marriage]. It will yet 'sail over and ride triumphantly above all the prejudice and priesthood of the day,' and no man or group of men can stop it; for it is God's plan, and it has been restored to earth for the last time. It will not be taken away, for it is a 'new and everlasting covenant.' It cannot be revoked, for it is eternal; 'and how can I, saith the Lord, revoke an eternal law?'

Men may spit and sputter; they may, like the fabled hen, imagine that the sky is falling down; they may go up and down the country crying blasphemy, because a handful of women insist on the right to motherhood by the husband of their choice; but... the principle of life and salvation couched in the marriage system of the Lord will go on until the whole earth is saturated and blessed with it.

One may as well try to break to pieces an impregnable wall, or turn the Mississippi river upstream as attempt to get rid of this principle, for it is of God, and it is bound to prevail...  

In considering the "Fundamentalist" position on plural marriage and the alleged authority by which such marriages are solemnized today, a knowledge of the "high priesthood" organization operating

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1Although the material presented in this Chapter constitutes the position of the "Musser Fundamentalists" in particular, it should be noted that the views of the "Church of the Firstborn" and other polygamous factions are essentially the same.

In corresponding with the "Church of the Firstborn" concerning their beliefs on plural marriage, the writer was referred to the "Musser" group for literature on the subject. And where arguments were given in support of the practice of polygamy today, they parallel that of the "Musser" group except where the concept of the "high priesthood" enters the picture, as already considered in Chapter II.

independent of the Latter-day Saint Church, as considered in Chapter II, is essential.

According to the "Fundamentalists" it was to Joseph Smith as President of the High Priesthood that the law of plural marriage was first revealed in this dispensation. He "... embraced it and passed it on to his associates in the Priesthood whom he thought could be trusted, years before the Church knew anything about it."¹ The reason for withholding this knowledge was that "... the Church was not prepared to receive all the revelations entrusted to the Priesthood, nor is it yet prepared to do so ... ."² This is borne out from the fact that in 1834 a committee of the Priesthood met in Kirtland, Ohio, to select from the revelations given to the Prophet Joseph Smith those necessary for the guidance of the church. When completed a year later, the collection was approved by the Church under the title: "Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints: Carefully selected from the Revelations of God and compiled by Joseph Smith, Jun., Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams ... ." From this title, "... it is clearly shown that only a part of the revelations were given to the Church at that time. Other revelations have since been added, and some subtracted, but there are still many more that have not been given to the Church."²

... One case in point is the revelation pertaining to Celestial or plural marriage. The record shows Joseph Smith received this revelation (D&C 132) as early as the year 1831. He did not entrust the Church with it. In 1843 a part of the revelation was reduced to writing and a number of the leading

¹Ibid.
²"Priesthood Matters," Truth, October 1, 1936, p. 74.
brothers in the Priesthood were secretly taught the law and permitted to enter into it, still the Church was not entrusted with it . . . .1

"Fundamentalists" further assert that the authority to perform plural marriages ". . . is a function of the higher order of Priesthood," and such marriages will ". . . in face of all opposition, be carried on under Priesthood authority."2 The reason for such strict adherence to this law is that plural marriage is a fundamental principle of the Gospel ". . . its practice being a necessity to all reaching out for the highest exaltation in the Celestial Glory . . . ."3

This is emphasized by quoting the following statements by Brigham Young which are only two of many on the subject: "Now where a man in this Church says, 'I don't want but one wife; I will have my religion with one,' he will perhaps be saved in the Celestial kingdom; but when he gets there he will not find himself in possession of any wife at all. . . ."4 On another occasion he spoke with equal force: ". . . the only men who become Gods, even the sons of God, are those who enter

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1Ibid. This point is emphasized by another writer in these words: ". . . Although the revelation pertaining to plural marriage was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith as early as 1831, it was not until some twelve years later (1843) that he was permitted to present it in written form to the higher quorums of the Priesthood, the Church as a body not having been entrusted with the information during the Prophet's life . . . ." (Joseph W. Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage (Salt Lake City: Truth Publishing Co., 1944), p. 21.)

2A Priesthood Issue, pp. 21, 24.

3Joseph W. Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 55. "We believe that while entering into this order of marriage is strictly voluntary on the part of the adherents, yet compliance with the law is necessary to obtain the highest exaltation in the kingdom of God." ("Our Position," Truth, August 1949, pp. 76-77.)

4Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (August 31, 1873), XVI, 166, as quoted in Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 34.
into polygamy. . . . "1

It is claimed that the law of plural marriage was not only declared to be a prerequisite to exaltation, but also destined never to be abrogated or suspended, as evidenced from a supposed revelation to John Taylor in 1886 in which the Lord said, "... I have not revoked this law, nor will I, for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof. . . ."2

1 Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (August 19, 1866), XI, 269. Quoted in Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 35.

2 As quoted in ibid., p. 39. See also pp. 33-44 for additional quotations on this subject. It should be noted here that according to the "Fundamentalists," the law of plural marriage "... has been observed by divine decree 'FROM THE BEGINNING OF CREATION UNTIL THIS TIME,' and in NOTHING did those adhering to the practice ... 'SIN, SAVE IN THOSE THINGS WHICH THEY RECEIVED NOT ...' of God. ("The Book of Mormon and Polygamy," Truth, April, 1950, p. 304.) From this it is reasoned that "... God's laws are eternal; that a law which was necessary for Abraham to live in order to attain to 'eternal lives' was also necessary for Jesus Christ, Peter and their associates, and likewise Joseph Smith and his followers. ..." (Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 14) It is generally understood that plural marriage was practiced in righteousness in ancient Israel. It is further noted, in addition, that it was due to the practice of this principle by the Savior and his apostles "... for which persecution was heaped upon them. ..." (Ibid., p. 37.) This order of marriage also, "... was doubtless a common feature of family life among members of the seven churches of Asia to whom the message of the Lord through John the Revelator was directed. He reproved all kinds of sin, including adultery, fornication, whoredoms, etc., then prevalent, but in no case was plural marriage mentioned." (Ibid., p. 21)

Contrary to common belief, assert the "Fundamentalists," the practice of this law was also required of the Book of Mormon people. The reason this is not readily apparent from the record is that "... the unsealed portion of the Book ... was brought forth in the ... day when prejudice against God's order of marriage was at its height. ..." Had the portion of the Book which was translated by the Prophet, included "... open arguments favoring or commanding the patriarchal order of marriage, there could have been little hope for its reception even on the scant scale that later did mark its adoption by the Saints. Children must needs be fed milk before meat. It is more than likely the historians of the record were impressed not to present this marriage principle in fulness in the abridgement prepared to be translated first, and yet it may be expected that when the sealed portion of the record is available the same will be found to be set
It is claimed that for twenty years after the inception of the law of plural marriage, that principle ". . . remained exclusively a Priesthood issue and was administered to members of the Priesthood wholly independent of the Church. . . ."¹ Then on August 29, 1852, the church ". . . was offered the benefits of the law and received the same as one of its tenets."² Ten years did not elapse, however, before

forth with clearness and positiveness." (Ibid., pp. 21-22.)

Inasmuch as those who oppose plural marriage refer to Jacob 2:23-27 in support of their position, continue the "Fundamentalists," it should be realized that this reference actually ". . . by implication, shows that polygamy was a common practice among the children of Israel as well on the American continent as it had always been on the eastern continent." That this is the case is seen from the statement of the Lord in verse 27: "There shall not any man among you have save it be one wife. . . ." This was spoken "... between 544 and 421 years B.C. . . . 400 years later (82 B.C.) . . . Amulek proclaimed . . . 'For behold, He hath blessed mine house, He hath blessed me, and my women, and my children. . . ." (Alma 10:11.) From this we must conclude that "Amulek not only had children and other sacred possessions, but 'women' also. He evidently was living in the plural relationship, and the Lord blessed him in it. Doubtless the Lord had again commanded His people--those who were worthy--and they embraced the principle of Celestial or plural marriage and began again to 'raise up seed unto him.'" (Ibid., p. 23.)

That the Jaredites, prior to this, also practiced plural marriage is inferred from the reference in Ether 1:41, "Go to and gather together . . . thy families; and also Jared thy brother and his family. . . ." From this ". . . we must assume the brother of Jared had more than one family. He was to take his 'FAMILIES,' while Jared, a monogamist, was directed to take his 'FAMILY'. . . ." For the "Fundamentalists" this clarifies the question of why Jared did not talk with the Lord himself instead of relying upon his brother; "The answer to the INFORMED is obvious: because the brother of Jared was living a law that entitled him to direct communication with the Lord . . . and Jared was not living that law. . . ." (Ibid., pp. 23-24.)

From the foregoing it is concluded that, "... a principle of righteousness practiced with divine approval in ancient days must necessarily remain a principle of righteousness throughout all times. . . ." (Ibid., p. 17.)

¹"Priesthood Matters," Truth, October 1, 1936, p. 74.

²A Priesthood Issue, p. 21. In this connection, it is asserted, ". . . a similar condition exists today: The Woodruff Manifesto stopped the system of plural marriages in the Church and yet the Priesthood, independent of the Church and wholly within its functions,
many of the Saints "... were urging the suspension or abrogation of the law, to avoid complications with the Government..." 1 As a result of the anti-polygamy legislation enacted by the Federal Government, which commenced with the Morrill law of 1862 and culminated with the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887, there arose in the church, "... a spirit of revolt among its members against the principle of plural marriage..."  

... because of lack of faith among the Saints encouraged by their sectarian traditions which glorified the law of monogamy as the ideal marriage system, Celestial marriage received but scant support by them. A desire for statehood, too, was uppermost in the hearts of many. The Saints were chafing under the yoke of territoriel 'carpet-bag' government, local self government being denied them. Congress had enacted measures against the marriage system of the Church, and the Supreme Court of the nation had declared the same constitutional. Many of the brethren were being imprisoned for disobedience to the Civil law. Messages reached the Saints emanating from leading members of Congress and from the President of the United States bearing the threat of a confiscation of the property of the Church and the disfranchisement of all church members, should they refuse to do so. 2

The "Fundamentalists" allege that it was in the midst of these trying times that divine opposition against the anti-polygamy legislation was revealed. It is claimed that a revelation was given to John Taylor in October, 1832, calling Seymour B. Young to fill a vacancy in the Quorum of Seventy; providing he would enter into the law of plural marriage; "... for," said the Lord, "... it is not meet that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my

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continued to teach the principle and induct people into it." ("Priesthood Matters," Truth, October 1, 1936, p. 74. See also infra, pp. 99-105.

1"It is Written, Apostasy," Truth, January, 1938, p. 136.

2Truth, October, 1938, p. 86.
priesthood. . . ."¹ To continue the "Fundamentalist" position:

. . . This revelation clearly indicated the opposition of heaven against the laws of Congress prohibiting plural marriage. The Lord had inspired the Constitution of the United States, under which document religious worship received protection; and since Congress now sought to deny certain citizens the right of worship, the Lord ignored its laws and counselled adherence to the laws of Heaven. This one fact, establishes beyond doubt or cavil the unconstitutionality of the anti-polygamous laws so far as Heaven is concerned. . . .²

Although impressed with the importance of the law of plural marriage, assert the "Fundamentalists," " . . . the Saints of the early eighties were not like the Saints in the time of Daniel, and the spirit of 'surrender' prevailed among them."³ They " . . . wanted statehood and were willing to surrender their most sacred heritage for it. . . ."³

By 1836 the situation was such that " . . . letters began to come to President John Taylor from such men as John Sharp, Horace Eldredge, William Jennings, John T. Caine, Abraham Hatch, President Cluff and many other leading men from all over the Church, asking the leaders to do something, as the Gentiles were talking of confiscating

¹The Four Hidden Revelations (n.p., n.d.), p. 13. "It is very clear from this that a definite and necessary qualification for one who presides over the Priesthood is to live this law of the Priesthood (D&C 132:28, 58, 61). . . ." (Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 16.)

²Truth, October, 1938, p. 86. "We have shown by the infallible testimony of direct revelation that God requires obedience to all laws emanating from Him; and, insofar as human laws do not conflict with His decrees, men are commanded to observe them. It is just as clear that when human enactments conflict with heavenly laws the latter take precedence and MUST be obeyed though such action results in severe penalties administered by the Civil Authorities." (Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 83. See also, Doctrine and Covenants 98:4-9 as quoted in ibid., page 57.)

³From an account by Lorin C. Woolley, Truth, July, 1949, p. 45.
their property in connection with the property of the Church."\(^1\) These letters ". . . all urged that something be done to satisfy the Gentiles so that their property would not be confiscated."\(^1\)

The "Fundamentalists" claim that at this time a "self appointed committee," consisting of Hyrum B. Clawson, Franklin S. Richards, John T. Caine and James Jack, with George Q. Cannon as chairman, was formed ". . . to get up a statement or manifesto that would meet the objections urged by the brethren above named. . . ."\(^1\) On Sunday, September 26, 1886, this committee met at the home of John W. Woolley in Centerville, Utah, where President Taylor was staying, to present the "Manifesto" for his consideration. Lorin C. Woolley relates the following:

I had just got back from a three day's trip, during most of which time I had been in the saddle, and being greatly fatigued, I had retired to rest.

Between one and two o'clock p.m. (September 26, 1886) Brother Bateman (Samuel) came and woke me up and asked me to be at my father's home, where a manifesto was to be discussed. I went there and found there were congregated Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, L. John Nuttall, Charles Birrell, George Q. Cannon, Franklin S. Richards and Hyrum B. Clawson.

We discussed the proposed Manifesto at length, but we were unable to become united in the discussion. Finally George Q. Cannon suggested that President Taylor take the matter up with the Lord and decide the same the next day.

Brothers Clawson and Richards were taken back to Salt Lake. That evening I was called to act as guard during the first part of the night, notwithstanding the fact that I was greatly fatigued on account of the three days' trip I had just completed.

The brethren retired to bed soon after 9 o'clock. The sleeping rooms were inspected by the guard as was the custom. President Taylor's room had no outside door. The windows were heavily screened.

Sometime after the brethren retired and while I was reading the Doctrine and Covenants, I was suddenly attracted to a light appearing under the door leading to President Taylor's room, and was at once startled to hear voices of men talking there. There were three distinct voices. I was bewildered because it was my duty to

\(^{1}\)Ibid.
keep people out of that room and evidently someone had entered without my knowing it. I made a hasty examination and found the door leading to the room bolted as usual. I then examined the outside of the house and found all the window screens intact. While examining the last window, and feeling greatly agitated, a voice spoke to me saying, 'Can't you feel the Spirit? Why should you worry?'

At this I returned to my post and continued to hear the voices in the room. They were so audible that although I did not see the parties I could place their positions in the room from the sound of their voices. The three voices continued until about midnight, when one of them left, and the other two continued. One of them I recognized as President John Taylor's voice. I called Charles Birrell (Charles Birrell was also a bodyguard of the brethren and was to take the second shift in watching on this night) and we both set up until eight o'clock the next morning.

When President Taylor came out of his room about eight o'clock of the morning of September 27, 1886, we could scarcely look at him on account of the brightness of his personage.

He stated, 'Brethren, I have had a very pleasant conversation with Brother Joseph (Joseph Smith).' I said, 'Boss, who is the man that was there until midnight?' He asked, 'What do you know about it, Lorin?' I told him all about my experience. He said, 'Brother Lorin, that was your Lord.'

We had no breakfast, but assembled ourselves in a meeting. I forget who opened the meeting. I was called to offer the benediction. I think my father, John W. Woolley, offered the opening prayer. There were present at the meeting, in addition to President Taylor, George Q. Cannon, L. John Nuttall, John W. Woolley, Samuel Bateman, Charles Wilkins, Charles Birrell, Daniel R. Bateman, Bishop Samuel Sedden, George Earl, my mother, Julia E. Woolley, my sister, Amy Woolley, and myself. The meeting was held from 9 o'clock in the morning until 5 in the afternoon, without intermission, being about eight hours in all.

President Taylor called the meeting to order. He had the Manifesto, that had been prepared under the direction of George Q. Cannon, read over again; he then put each person under covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or plural marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle.

By that time we were all filled with the Holy Ghost. President Taylor and those present occupied about three hours up to this time. After placing us under covenant, he placed his finger on the document, his person rising from the floor about a foot or eighteen inches, end with countenance animated by the Spirit of the Lord, and raising his right hand to the square, he said, 'Sign that document,--never! I would suffer my right hand to be severed from my body first. Sanction it,--never! I would suffer my tongue to be torn from its roots in my mouth before I would sanction it!'

After that he talked for about an hour and then sat down and wrote the revelation which was given him by the Lord upon the
question of plural marriage... Then he talked to us for some time, and said, 'Some of you will be handled and ostracized and cast out from the Church by your brethren because of your faithfulness and integrity to this principle, and some of you may have to surrender your lives because of the same, but woe, woe, unto those who shall bring these troubles upon you.' (Three of us were handled and ostracized for supporting and sustaining this principle. There are only three left who were at the meeting mentioned--Daniel R. Bateman, George Earl and myself. So far as I know those of them who have passed away all stood firm to the covenants entered into from that day to the day of their deaths).

After the meeting referred to, President Taylor had L. John Nuttall write five copies of the revelation. He called five of us together: Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, George Q. Cannon, John W. Woolley and myself.

He then set us apart and placed us under covenant that while we lived we would see to it that no year passed by without children being born in the principle of plural marriage. We were given authority to ordain others when necessary, under the direction of the worthy senior (by ordination), so that there should be no cessation in the work. He then gave each of us a copy of the revelation.

I am the only one of the five now living, and so far as I know all five of the brethren remained true and faithful to the covenants they entered into, and to the responsibilities placed upon them at that time.

1The alleged revelation is as follows: "My Son John: You have asked me concerning the New and Everlasting Covenant and how far it is binding upon my people; thus saith the Lord: All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling themselves by my name, unless they are revoked by me or by my authority, and how can I revoke an everlasting covenant; for I the Lord am everlasting and my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated, nor done away with, but they stand forever.

Have I not given my word in great plainness on this subject? Yet have not great numbers of my people been negligent in the observance of my laws and the keeping of my commandments, and yet have I borne with them these many years; and this because of their weakness, because of the perils of times, and furthermore, it is more pleasing to me that men should use their free agency in regards to these matters. Nevertheless, I the Lord do not change and my word and my covenants and my law do not.

And as I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph: All those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law. And have I not commanded men that if they were Abraham's seed and would enter into my glory, they must do the works of Abraham? I have not revoked this law, nor will I, for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof; Even so, Amen." ("The Revelation of the Lord to John Taylor," Truth, July, 1949, pp. 41-43.)
During the eight hours we were together, and while President Taylor was talking to us, he frequently arose and stood above the floor, and his countenance and being were so enveloped by light and glory that it was difficult for us to look upon him. He stated that the document (referring to the Manifesto), was from the lower regions. He stated that many of the things he had told us we would forget and they would be taken from us, but that they would return to us in due time as needed, and from this fact we would know that the same was from the Lord. This has been literally fulfilled. Many of the things I forgot, but they are coming to me gradually, and those things that came to me are as clear as on the day on which they were given.

President Taylor said that the time would come when many of the Saints would apostatize because of this principle. He said 'one-half of this people would apostatize over the principle for which we are now in hiding; yea, and possibly one-half of the other half.' (rising off the floor while making the statement). He also said the day will come when a document similar to that (Manifesto) then under consideration would be adopted by the Church, following which 'APOSTASY AND WHOREDOM would be rampant in the Church.'

He said that in the time of the seventh President of this Church, the Church would go into bondage both temporally and spiritually and in that day (the day of bondage) the one Mighty and Strong spoken of in the 35th section of the Doctrine and Covenants would come.

Among other things stated by President Taylor on this occasion was this, "I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of the seventh president, and that there would be thousands that think they hold the priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them.'

John Taylor set the five mentioned apart and gave them authority to perform marriage ceremonies, and also to set others apart to do the same thing as long as they remained upon the earth; and while doing so, the Prophet Joseph Smith stood by directing the proceedings. Two of us had not met the Prophet Joseph Smith in his mortal lifetime and we--Charles H. Wilkins and myself--were introduced to him and shook hands with him.

(Signed) Lorin C. Woolley

Daniel Bateman's testimony of the above related events is as follows:

I was privileged to be at the meeting of September 27, 1836, spoken of by Brother Woolley, I myself acting as one of the guards for the brethren during those exciting times. The proceedings of the meeting, as related by Brother Woolley, are correct in every

1Ibid., pp. 45-48.
detail. I was not present when the five spoken of by Brother Woolley were set apart for special work, but have on different occasions heard the details of the same related by Brother Lorin C. Woolley and John W. Woolley, and from all the circumstances with which I am familiar, I firmly believe the testimony of these two brethren to be true.\footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 48.}

According to the "Fundamentalists," another witness attests to the momentous events of September 27, 1886:

\ldots He was at the time a young chore-boy, passing in and out of the house from time to time; and while he recollects such a gathering as having taken place his memory as to details is not such as to constitute him a reliable witness. This man is George Earl, now residing at Centerville, Utah; Elder Earl, in a recent interview, while disclaiming a recollection of the details of the meeting referred to, with emphasis stated that after a life-long acquaintance with John W. Woolley, Lorin C. Woolley and Daniel R. Bateman, he considers them to be men of probity and strict honesty, and that their testimony on any question can be relied upon. \ldots \footnote{\textit{Truth}, January, 1937, p. 118.}\footnote{\textit{A Priesthood Issue}, p. 25. Consult \textit{supra}, p.19 for a definition of the Apostleship here referred to.}

The five men mentioned above, who it is alleged were chosen on September 27, 1886, and authorized to perpetuate plural marriages "\ldots after the church should have discontinued them within its jurisdiction," were also supposed to have been given the Apostleship held by John Taylor \ldots which he had received under the hands of the Prophet Joseph Smith. \ldots \footnote{\textit{Ibid.}, p. 48.} It is claimed that later, a sixth person, Joseph F. Smith, (who later became President of the Church) who at that time was on a mission in Hawaii received a similar commission from John Taylor shortly before the latter's death. "These six men \ldots with Wilford Woodruff (who received his anointings under the hands of Joseph the Prophet) formed the Priesthood Presidency at that time, with John Taylor the head thereof; such another Priesthood group..."
as had been set up in the days of Joseph himself. . . ."¹

The significance of the above allegations is two-fold: They supposedly provide detailed evidence of the High Priesthood organization functioning independent of the Church;² and, it is from the claim of a special "dispensation of priesthood" bestowed on September 27, 1836, that the practice of plural marriage can ". . . be perpetuated from one generation to another without Church consent. . . ."³

Following the special dispensation of authority in September, 1836, hostility against the law of plural marriage increased ". . . until in 1837 a large group of Saints petitioned the Government for statehood, promising to repudiate the Celestial marriage law and cease to live it. . . ."⁴ The "Fundamentalists" assert that in September, 1890, the Saints ". . . almost to a man . . . apostatized from this great law of marriage. . . ."⁵ On October 6, 1890, ". . . after some thirty-eight years helping to promote the law . . . the Church became weary and gave it up. It was given up voluntarily, and in direct opposition to a revelation to John Taylor (Sept. 26-7, 1836) and to Wilford Woodruff (Nov. 24, 1839). . . ."⁶

The "Fundamentalists" conclude their argument with the affirmation:

. . . The work inaugurated under the Priesthood Presidency of John Taylor must go on. Those opposing it will naturally incur the righteous indignation of an offended God. We are assured that

¹Ibid. ²Consult supra, pp. 5-22.
⁴"It is Written Apostasy," Truth, January, 1938, p. 136.
⁵Ibid. ⁶A Priesthood Issue, p. 21.
no principle revealed in this dispensation will be revoked or withdrawn. Those desiring the blessings of Abraham must do the works of Abraham—live the law which Abraham lived. There is no alternative. The desire for world popularity or the fear of punishment from the enemy does not solve the problem. The Saints must . . . let the Lord fight such of their battles as they themselves are unequal to.¹

¹Ibid., p. 23.
CHAPTER VI

THE PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE--THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW

Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle, Behold and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; . . .

With these words begins the revelation by which the practice of plural marriage was introduced and practiced by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for nearly fifty years. That the position of "Fundamentalist" groups advocating continued authority for the solemnization of such marriages today may be better evaluated, a review of the history of that principle as it affected the Latter-day Saints and the nation at large will be undertaken in this Chapter.

As indicated above, the revelation came in answer to a query concerning the justification for the practice of plural marriage among certain ancient prophets. The answer, however, as recorded by the Prophet Joseph Smith, went far beyond the scope of his inquiry:

... behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.

For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the

1Doctrine and Covenants 132:1-3.
world.

And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.

Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven; which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.

For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.

And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; . . . it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity; and shall be of full force when they are out of the world; and they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they can continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have
all power, and the angels are subject unto them.\(^1\)

Not only was the doctrine of "Celestial marriage" revealed, by which the bonds of matrimony might properly be extended beyond this life into the eternities to come, but also the rightfulness, under certain conditions, of a plurality of wives.

In answer to the question of original inquiry, Joseph Smith was told that certain ancient prophets were justified in practicing the law of plural marriage, "because this was the law... and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me."\(^2\) Sarah, it was noted, gave Hagar to Abraham as an additional wife. "And why did she do it? Because this was the law... Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord commanded it."\(^2\) It was further revealed that David's plural wives "were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan my servant,... who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife..."\(^2\)

In accordance with the law by which the Biblical prophets were justified in the practice of plural marriage, the same authority was restored to Joseph Smith.

For I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things... And verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens...

... 

... 

And again, verily I say unto you, my servant Joseph, that

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\(^1\)Ibid., 132:4-7; 15-17; 19-20.

\(^2\)Ibid., 132:34-39.
whosoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give anyone on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings, and with my power, saith the Lord, and shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven.

And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.

And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him, therefore he is justified.¹

The clamor which accompanied the practice of plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints soon obscured the fact that the crux of the revelation centered on the eternity of the marriage covenant (celestial marriage) of which the plurality of wives was but an incident.

B. H. Roberts, the Latter-day Saint historian, observes that "the world never made a greater mistake than when it supposed that plural marriage was hailed with delight by the elders who were commanded of the Lord to introduce its practice in this generation."² The traditions and prejudices of many of the Saints coupled with the additional ridicule and persecution that would accrue from its practice in a monogamous society were no doubt reasons for the secrecy which enshrouded the inception and early practice of the doctrine. Although the revelation on marriage was not recorded until July, 1843, it is evident that the practice had commenced a few years previously and that by the time the Saints were driven from Illinois in 1847 the doctrine of plural marriage was common knowledge among the inhabitants.

¹Ibid., 132:45-46; 48; 61-62.
²Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, II, 103.
of Nauvoo.1

On August 29, 1852, when Apostle Orson Pratt announced to a congregation of Latter-day Saints in the Tabernacle in Salt Lake City, "it is quite unexpected to me, brethren and sisters, to be called upon to address you this forenoon; and still more so, to address you upon the principle which has been named, a plurality of wives,\(^2\) it marked the first official announcement of the doctrine of plural marriage as a tenet of the Latter-day Saint Church. In continuing, the speaker expressed his conviction that the government of the United States,

... will not ... try us for treason for believing and practicing our religious notions and ideas. I think, if I am not mistaken, that the Constitution gives the privilege to all the inhabitants of the country, of the free exercise of their religious notions, and the freedom of their faith and the practice of it... .\(^2\)

In the afternoon of the same day, Brigham Young asserted:

... The principle spoken upon by brother Pratt, this morning, we believe in. And I tell you—for I know it—it will sail over and ride triumphantly above all the prejudice and priestcraft of the day; it will be fostered and believed in by the more intelligent portion of the world as one of the best doctrines ever proclaimed to any people... .\(^3\)

Almost from the moment of its inception, the practice of plural marriage was engulfed in a spirit of opposition. As already noted, one of the apparent reasons for the enforced secrecy that surrounded the practice in the beginning was that such a doctrine would not only increase the outside opposition to Mormonism, but would run contrary to

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1Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses* (October 7, 1869), XIII, 192-93.


the traditions and prejudices of some of the Saints themselves.¹ That such was the case is evident from the enthusiasm with which the doctrine was defended. In addressing a congregation of Saints in Provo in 1855, Brigham Young observed: "I frequently hear from others that this doctrine [plural marriage] is laughed at and ridiculed; I heard yesterday of its being laughed out of doors, even jeered and sneered out of a Bishop's house." He then pointed out that the practice was introduced for the purpose of raising up a "royal priesthood" who "... will become mighty in faith, be powerful in defending the truth, and will soon have to take important places in the great work of this dispensation." He added that the doctrine of plural marriage was not designed to afflict anyone, but is "... purposed for our exaltation in the kingdoms of God. ... ." And then he warned,

... if any of you will deny the plurality of wives, and continue to do so I promise that you will be damned; and I will go still further and say, take this revelation, or any other revelation that the Lord has given, and deny it in your feelings, and I promise that you will be damned.²

A few months later, Heber C. Kimball, speaking to the saints in the Bowery in Salt Lake City asserted that if they should take a course to oppose the doctrine of plural marriage,

... that course will corrode you with a spirit of apostasy, and you will go overboard; still a great many do so, and strive to justify themselves in it, but they are not justified of God. When you take that course ... you oppose anything which God has instituted for His glory and the exaltation of man. ... ³

¹Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, II, 103.
²Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (July 14, 1855), III, 264-65.
³Heber C. Kimball, Ibid. (October 6, 1855), III, 125.
He closed his remarks by saying,

... The principle of plurality of wives never will be done away although some sisters have had revelations that, when this time passes away and they go through the veil, every woman will have a husband to herself. I wish more of our young men would take to themselves wives of the daughters of Zion. ... Go ahead upon the right principle, young gentlemen, and God bless you for ever and ever, and make you fruitful, that we may fill the mountains and then the earth with righteous inhabitants. ... 

During a spiritual "reformation" that permeated the camp of the Saints during the following year, Kimball again noted:

Some quietly listen to those who speak against ... the plurality of wives, and against almost every principle that God has revealed. Such persons have half-a-dozen devils with them all the time. You might as well deny 'Mormonism,' and turn away from it, as to oppose the plurality of wives. ... 

On another occasion Brigham Young observed that ". . . it is in the hearts of many . . . to wish that the doctrine of polygamy was not taught and practiced by us. . . ." He continued:

... It may be hard for many, and especially for the ladies, yet it is no harder for them than it is for the gentlemen. It is the word of the Lord, and I wish to say to you, and all the world, that if you desire with all your hearts to obtain the blessings which Abraham obtained, you will be polygamists at least in your faith, or you will come short of enjoying the salvation and the glory which Abraham has obtained. This is as true as that God lives. You who wish that there were no such thing in existence, if you have in your hearts to say: 'We will pass along in the Church without obeying or submitting to it in our faith or believing this order, because, for aught that we know, this community may be broken up yet, and we may have lucrative offices offered to us; we will not, therefore, be polygamists lest we should fail in obtaining some earthly honor, character and office, etc.'--that man that has that in his heart, and will continue to persist in pursuing that policy, will come short of dwelling in the presence of the Father and the Son, in celestial glory. The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. Others attain unto a glory and may even be permitted to come into the presence of the Father and the Son; but they cannot

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1 Heber C. Kimball, Ibid. (October 6, 1855), III, 125.
2 Kimball, Ibid. (October 12, 1856), V, 203-204.
reign as kings in glory, because they had blessings offered unto them, and they refused to accept them.\textsuperscript{1}

The Church was confronted not only with murmuring from within, but also with the spectacle of running counter to the mores of 19th century America. Public opposition to the practice of plural marriage was mainly sporadic and unorganized until 1856, when the newly-formed Republican Party announced, as one of the planks in its platform, the eradication of those "twin relics of barbarism"--slavery and polygamy.\textsuperscript{2}

It was not, however, until a Republican congress convened in 1860 that any headway was made toward the suppression of this "odious" element from American society. The first significant legislation against plural marriage was introduced in Congress by Justin S. Morrill of Vermont in 1860 and was enacted into law on July 1, 1862. Among other things, the Morrill bill held that bigamy, which was defined as the marriage of one or more persons to anyone already having a living husband or wife, to be a crime punishable by a fine of $500.00 and imprisonment of five years.\textsuperscript{3}

The Morrill bill proved ineffectual mainly because of its weak construction and the lack of provisions to enforce it. So far as the Church was concerned, such legislation was a dead letter, since it was directed toward the eradication of a principle of religion. The saints felt that should the constitutionality of this law be tested by the Supreme Court, their views in the matter would be borne out.

\textsuperscript{1}Brigham Young, Ibid. (August 19, 1866), XI, 268-69.


\textsuperscript{3}Consult Ibid., pp. 93-116.
Consequently, nine years after the passage of the Morrill bill, when asked what he intended to do about it, Brigham Young answered: "Nothing at all; we mind our own business, and I hope everybody else will. We have not meddled with it, and do not expect to. . . ." As long as judicial matters in the Territory of Utah were determined by Latter-day Saint judges and juries, the practice of plural marriage was secure.

It was not long after the first legislation had been enacted against the Mormon marriage system that prominent individuals began to propose that the Church abolish the practice. In June, 1865, Schuyler Colfax, Speaker of the House of Representatives and his party visited Utah. During the course of an interview with Brigham Young and a few other church leaders, President Young asked the gentleman what the government intended to do with the remaining "relic of barbarism" now that the slavery issue had been settled. Mr. Colfax replied that he thought it would be appropriate for the Church to have another revelation abolishing the practice. He reasoned that

... as the people of Missouri and Maryland, without waiting for the action of the general government against slavery, themselves believing it to be wrong and an impediment to their prosperity, had taken measures to abolish it; so he hoped that the people of the Mormon Church would see that polygamy was a hindrance and not a help, and move for its abandonment.

Mr. Bowles, one of the Colfax party, later recorded that President Young's reaction,

... left with us the impression that if public opinion and the government united vigorously, but at the same time discreetly

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1 Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (May 21, 1871), XIV, 120.

2 Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, V, 178.
to press the question, there would be found some way to acquiesce in the demand, and change the practice of the present fathers of the church.¹

Colfax's impression was that "...they the Mormons see their system cannot stand; and ... they have contemplated the possibility of sometime or other stopping the practice by a new revelation."¹

Any feeling, however, that the Church would "acquiesce" in the demands of the country and renounce its marriage practices, was a misconception. Should the doctrine of plural marriage be altered in any way, it was immature to believe that it would come from any source than that which gave it: ". . . If it is wrong for a man to have more than one wife at a time, the Lord will reveal it by and by, and he will put it away that it will not be known in the Church. I did not ask Him for the revelation upon this subject. . . . But the Lord revealed it, and it was my business to accept it."

Following the Civil War, anti-Mormon sentiment again revived, resulting in a rash of proposals in Congress, which, although failing of enactment, showed the extent to which the country was willing to go to stamp out the polygamy aspect of the Mormon marriage system. The proposed legislation for the post-bellum years provided for packed juries, test oaths, suspension of the statute of limitations, permission of wives to testify against their husbands, confiscation of property without due process of law, military violence, and, in general, complete

¹Ibid., p. 179.
²Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (August 19, 1866) XI, 268.
destruction of local self-government in Utah.¹

The opposition engendered by these proposals finally culminated in the Poland Act, which became law on June 23, 1874. This measure took its name from Luke P. Poland of Vermont and, although it was less drastic than some of its proposed predecessors, nevertheless was the beginning of a series of congressional enactments which not only deprived the Territory of Utah of local self-government, but threatened the Church with utter extinction.

In general, the Poland Act relieved the probate courts in Utah of all criminal, civil, and chancery jurisdiction. The offices of territorial marshal and territorial attorney-general were abolished and their duties assigned to the US marshal and US district attorney who in turn were authorized to appoint as many deputies and assistants as they deemed necessary.²

Despite the inauguration of prosecution against polygamy following the enactment of the Poland law, the Latter-day Saints were still confident that such legislation was unconstitutional, and that once the matter reached the Supreme Court it would be resolved in their favor. George Q. Cannon later rehearsed the position of the Church in these words:

... We believed for years that the law of July 1, 1862, was in direct conflict with the first amendment to the Constitution, which says that "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment or religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." We rested upon that, and for years continued the practice of plural marriage, believing the law against it to be an unconstitutional one, and that we had the right, under the Constitution, to carry

¹See Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, V, 433-39.

out this principle practically in our lives. So confident was I in relation to this view that in conversations with President Grant, and with his Attorney General, Ex-Senator Williams, of Oregon, I said to them that if my case were not barred by the statute of limitations I would be willing to have it made a test case in order that the law might be tested. We were sustained in this view not only by our interpretation of the amendment to the Constitution, but also by some of the best legal minds in the country, who took exactly the same view that we did—that this law was an interference with religious rights, and that so long as our practices did not interfere with the happiness and peace of society, or of others, we had the right to carry out this principle. . . . Now, we were very confident that this law was an unconstitutional one. President Daniel H. Wells will remember how he and I tried to get a case to test the constitutionality of the law during the lifetime of President Brigham Young. We wanted to get Brother Erastus Snow. It is the last thing that we should have thought of to put a man like he was in the gap if we had not been firmly convinced that the law was unconstitutional and would be declared so by the United States Supreme Court. We telegraphed to Brother Erastus in the south, thinking that his case would not be barred by the statute of limitations. He replied to us concerning it, and we found that it was barred. Brother A. M. Musser proposed himself, if I remember aright, to be a test case, whenever it was presented, to be presented fairly, that there should be no evasion about it, but that it should be a case that could be tested fairly before the courts of the country. Finally, Brother George Reynolds was selected. . . .

In October, 1874, George Reynolds, private secretary of Brigham Young, was indicted for violation of the Anti-Bigamy law of 1862 and, upon being convicted, his case eventually reached the Supreme Court of the United States. The ensuing decision was not as the Church had anticipated, however, for on January 6, 1879, the Court ruled that it was "... within the legitimate scope of the power of every civil government to determine whether polygamy or monogamy shall be the law of social life under its domain." As a result of this ruling, the unconstitutional argument for ignoring the anti-polygamy legislation was swept away. The only recourse for continuing to ignore

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1Deseret News Weekly, October 18, 1890, p. 550.
the law was that plural marriage had been divinely commanded and as such could not be eradicated by fiat of an earthly government. This position was expressed by Franklin D. Richards at the following October conference:

Now, . . . the government has determined that polygamy shall be abolished, but the government of heaven had previously determined that polygamy should be established. . . . This is our position, this is where we are today. We have accepted this doctrine, this principle of faith from the Lord Jesus Christ, and we, or some of us, have lived it more than thirty years in this Territory. And in the matter of our appeal, inasmuch as the government is determined to eradicate this item of our faith, and us with it, of course, and inasmuch as we can get no redress therefrom, our appeal must be to the government of heaven, to which we have vowed allegiance. . . .

Following in the wake of the Supreme Court decision of 1879 came an unprecedented wave of anti-Mormon sentiment accompanied by a challenge for more extensive legislation against the practice of plural marriage. The resulting climax came in the form of a bill which George Q. Cannon observed, should have been named "... a law to promote adultery, and to encourage cruelty to women and children. . . ." The Edmunds Act, as it was called, became law on March 22, 1882, and included the following provisions:

Polygamy was defined as a crime, punishable by a $500 fine or five years imprisonment or both. Polygamous living was also declared a misdemeanor and was punishable by a fine of three hundred dollars or six months imprisonment or both. Under this provision it became possible to prosecute a man not only for the act of marrying another woman but also the act of living with her.

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2 Juvenile Instructor, April 15, 1882, p. 120.
The Edmunds law also excluded any person from jury service who either practiced or believed in polygamy. It further stipulated that a prospective juror could be challenged under oath regarding either of these facts. If he refused to answer on the ground of self-incrimination, such a refusal could not be used to incriminate him, but it would disqualify him from jury service.

No person guilty of polygamy or unlawful cohabitation was entitled to vote or hold office. All registration and election offices in the Territory of Utah were declared vacant and the supervision of elections was temporarily turned over to a Commission of five persons, appointed by the President, with authority to appoint election officers.¹

Following the enactment of the Edmunds law, the question arose in the minds of some of the Saints as to what course they should pursue in reference to the laws of the land now that the anti-polygamy legislation had been declared constitutional. The matter was clarified by Joseph F. Smith at the general conference of the Church in April, 1882:

We are told here that no man need break the laws of the land who will keep the laws of God. But this is further defined by the passage which I read afterwards—the law of the land, which all have no need to break, is that law which is the Constitutional law of the land, and that is as God himself has defined it. And whatsoever is more or less than this cometh of evil. Now it seems to me that this makes this matter so clear that it is not possible for any man who professes to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to make any mistake, or to be in doubt as to the course he should pursue under the command of God in relation to the observance of the laws of the land. . . .

The Lord Almighty requires this people to observe the laws

of the land, to be subject to "the powers that be," so far as
they abide by the fundamental principles of good government,
but He will hold them responsible if they will pass unconstitu-
tional measures and frame unjust and prescriptive laws, as did
Nebuchadnezzar and Darius, in relation to the three Hebrew chil-
dren and Daniel. If lawmakers have a mind to violate their oath,
break their covenants and their faith with the people, and de-
part from the provisions of the Constitution where is the law
human or divine, which binds me, as an individual, to outwardly
and openly proclaim my acceptance of their acts?

I firmly believe that the only way in which we can be sustained
in regard to this matter by God our Heavenly Father is by follow-
ing the illustrious examples we find in holy writ. And while we
regret, and look with sorrow upon the acts of men who seek to
bring us into bondage and to oppress us, we must obey God, for
He has commanded us to do so; and at the same time He has declared
that in obeying the laws which He has given us we will not
necessarily break the constitutional laws of the land.\(^1\)

In the face of the renewed onslaught against plural marriage,
the consensus among the church leaders was that the Church would
weather the storm:

Will these attacks upon us continue? Most certainly. The
aim now is to destroy plural marriage, to make it odious, to de-
prive everybody who practice it of all the rights of citizens
and even to make belief in it punishable. The Latter-day Saints
testify that God has revealed this doctrine to the Church. If
he has done so, can man destroy it? If it is from Him, will he
not take care of that doctrine and those who believe in and
practice it? He has never yet deserted anyone who put his trust
in Him. He will not do so now. It will be interesting, there-
fore, to us who have faith in God and in His power, to witness
the struggle and its outcome. We believe that that which is now
being done against the gospel will only help to spread it and
fasten it more firmly upon the earth.\(^2\)

This feeling was verified in the report of the Utah Commission
for the year 1884: "The public should not expect as the immediate re-
sult of the present laws of Congress, nor, indeed, of any legislation,
however radical, the sudden overthrow of polygamy."\(^3\)

\(^1\)Joseph F. Smith, Journal of Discourses (April 9, 1882),
XXIII, 70-71.

\(^2\)Juvenile Instructor, November 1, 1882, p. 328.

\(^3\)As cited in the Salt Lake Tribune, December 3, 1884, p. 1.
Prosecutions against plural marriage and unlawful cohabitation began in 1883, and between 1884 and 1887 they reached crusade proportions. During these years law enforcement in Utah became almost a complete farce. Novel ways of interpreting the Edmunds law were discovered and thrust into action, and it soon appeared as if the warning of one of the crusaders would be literally fulfilled: "If you do not submit, [to the Edmunds Law] of course you must take the consequences; but the will of the American people is expressed and this law will go on and grind you and your institution to powder!"  

The clause in the Edmunds Act proscribing unlawful cohabitation was soon given a unique interpretation, by which it was held that sexual association alone was not necessary to constitute the misdemeanor, but that the offense was complete "... when a man to all outward appearances is living or associating with more than one woman as his wife."  

By this interpretation it became possible to convict a person of "crime" even from ordinary acts of association and courtesy, and it soon became apparent that nothing short of complete abandonment of a person's family would satisfy the law.

Another unique interpretation was employed whereby single instances of living with one's plural wife or wives were segregated as separate offenses, each of which drew the full penalty of the law. By this means it became possible to convict a "polygamist," imprison him for life, and require an inexhaustible supply of money to satisfy the

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1Deseret News Weekly, October 21, 1885. As cited in Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 113.

2Deseret News Weekly, October 7, 1885, p. 594.
demands of justice.

The campaign against plural marriage also circumvented the fourth amendment to the Constitution which guarantees persons the right to be secure against unreasonable searches and seizures. Hunting "cohabs" became a lucrative employment in Utah following the enactment of the Edmunds law, and paid informers were set to work under the guise of the law to ferret out offenders:

Some of these assumed the role of peddlers, or of tramps, imposing upon the good feelings of those whom they sought to betray. Others passed themselves off as tourists intent upon gathering information respecting the country and its resources. Children going to or returning from school were stopped by strangers upon the streets and interrogated concerning the relations and acts of their parents. At night dark forms prowled around people's premises, peering into windows, or watching for the opening of doors, to catch glimpses of persons supposed to be inside. More than one of the hirelings thrust themselves into sick rooms and women's bed chambers, rousing the sleepers by pulling the bed clothes from off them. If admittance was refused, houses would be broken into. Delicate and refined women, about to become mothers or with infants in arms, were awakened at unseemly hours and conveyed long distances through the night, to be arraigned before United States Commissioners. Male fugitives, if they did not immediately surrender when commanded, were fired upon.\(^1\)

It is little wonder, then, that John Taylor, in answer to the question, "Won't you submit to the dignity of the law?", made the following reply:

... Well I would if the law would only be a little dignified. But when we see the ermine bedraggled in the mud and mire, and every principle of justice violated, it behooves men to take care of themselves as best they may. That is what I have told people while I have been in the south--to take care of their liberties, to put their trust in the living God, to obey every constitutional law, and to adhere to all correct principles. But when men tamper with your rights and with your liberties, when the cities are full of spies and the lowest, meanest of men are set to watch and dog your footsteps; when little children are set in array

against their fathers and mothers, and women and children are
badgered before courts and made to submit, unprotected, to the
gibes of libertines and corrupt men, when wives and husbands are
pitted against each other and threatened with pains, penalties,
and imprisonment, if they will not disclose that which among all
decent people is considered sacred, and which no man of delicacy,
whose sensibilities had not been blunted by the low associations,
would ever ask; when such a condition of affairs exist, it is no
longer a land of liberty, and it is certainly no longer a land
of equal rights, and we must take care of ourselves as best we
may, and avoid being caught in any of their snares. . . . 1

Despite assurance that the saints need not fear the outcome
of the conflict, 2 there was a growing spirit of compromise manifest
toward the practice of plural marriage. Speaking to a congregation in
the Tabernacle on March 29, 1885, during the heat of the anti-polygamy
campaign, George Reynolds stated: "I have met a few in our midst who
seemed to have an idea that there was a Gospel of compromise. . . ."
He then observed:

Have you ever heard of a time in any age or dispensation since
this earth first rolled forth from the presence of God, that men
professing to be His servants have gained anything in this life
or for the next by faltering in their obedience to the require-
ments of heaven, by laying aside the armour of faith, by turning
from that which they had espoused, and which they realized to be
of God? If you have heard of such a people . . . your reading
and your experience have been different to mine. . . . 3

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1Deseret News Weekly, February 25, 1885. Quoted in Roberts,
Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 122-23.

2Supra, p. 120.

3George Reynolds, Journal of Discourses (March 29, 1885), XXVI,
159-60. Heber J. Grant expressed his feelings toward the spirit of
compromise in these words: "The time has come when the line must be
drawn, men have professed to be Latter-day Saints, have entered into
plural marriage, but when the Edmunds law was passed they went to their
second wife and asked her to go home to her mother. When they entered
into this covenant they professed belief in the doctrine. I say when
a man has entered into any such covenant and asks his wife to go back to
her mother because the Government has passed a law, is unworthy, and I
am gratified that the law was passed. We might not have been able to
find out such men without it; I have a contempt for such men. . . . The
desires of my heart are to keep the command of God." (Deseret News,
October 5, 1883, p. 2.)
Two months later, this same theme was the subject of an editorial by George Q. Cannon:

I have already heard that some of this class talk of compromise. What they mean by compromise, I suppose, is to give up some principle of the gospel and promise not to obey or practice it. As the principle of patriarchal marriage is the one now so savagely attacked, this is the one such persons are preparing themselves to yield. I view such men as apostates already at heart. They are more dangerous than our open enemies. Our open enemies we are prepared to resist. We look for nothing from them but opposition. But not so with those who have a standing in the Church. They are among us, are called Saints and are inside our citadel. They can betray us because of these advantages. . . .

There are men who say: 'Yield this practice for the present; perhaps public opinion may soften and then this principle may be taught and practiced.' I look upon such a suggestion as from the devil. It would be quite as proper to propose apostasy for a short season until public opinion would become more favorable to us. . . .

Those who advocated the renunciation of the law of plural marriage sought scriptural support for their position by quoting passages in the Doctrine and Covenants. On June 5, 1885, the Deseret News pointed out the absurdity of using such references to support compromise:

Influences are at work whose object is to create an impression in favor of the renunciation or temporary suspension of the law of celestial marriage. Arguments are being used to that end, in a semi-private way, with a view to gaining converts to that idea.

Perhaps such pleading may influence a few people who are not in the habit of probing subjects to the bottom and are not particularly gifted with the power to analyze the motives by which men are actuated. Good Latter-day Saints, however, who have within themselves that needful reason for the hope that inspires them are not affected by the shallow pretexts of semi-apostates.

To give a Gospel coloring to the position assumed by those who express themselves as ready to sell out whatever hold they may have on the work of God, they complacently quote from the revelations contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. Attempts are made to twist these divine communications from their plain intent, in order that they may subserve ulterior purposes. In this connection reference is made to the following, to be found

1Juvenile Instructor, May 15, 1885, p. 156.
on page 213.
"For verily I say unto you, my law shall be kept on this land.
"Let no man think he is ruler, but let God rule him that judgeth, according to the counsel of his own will, or, in other words, him that counseleth or sitteth upon the judgment seat.
"Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land:
"Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until He reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under His feet."

It is argued—'If it is not necessary to break the law of the land in order to keep the law of God, why not renounce or abrogate celestial marriage?'

There is certainly a conflict between a law of God and an alleged law of the land. Those who understand and accept the revelation on celestial marriage to be what it purports to be, cannot consistently hold, on account of the foregoing quotation, that it should be set aside, in the face of the declaration—'My law shall be kept on this land.' But if there really is a genuine law of the land in conflict with it, there is an apparent incongruity in the declaration as a whole.

What constitutes a genuine law of the land? This can be commensurately answered by stating the general proposition that the Constitution is the 'Supreme law of the land,' and all statutes made in conformity with its provisions, in letter and spirit, are genuine laws. Those which conflict with it, according to that proposition are not. The Edmunds act is grossly unconstitutional, and therefore is not essentially a law of the land in the true sense of the term, because it is an infringement on constitutional privileges, being ex post facto, a bill of attainder, and a curtailment of religious liberty.

If it were a constitutional law there would be no conflict between it and the revelation on celestial marriage. There being a clash, there is no alternative but to sustain what God has given.

It may be urged that the Supreme Court has decided upon the right of Congress to pass the Edmunds act, and that settles the question of Constitutionality. It settles it in a legal sense, but not as a matter of fact. And facts are stubborn things. The truth is what the Saints are seeking and what they propose to accept and stand by.

The Lord anticipated the passage of unconstitutional measures whose objects would be to oppose His law and afflict His people, as will be seen by a later revelation from which we will now quote, as found on page 342, Book of Doctrine and Covenants:
"And now, verily I say unto you concerning the laws of the land, it is my will that my people should observe to do all things whatsoever I command them;
"And that law of the land which is constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges, belongs to all mankind, and is justifiable before me;
"Therefore, I, the Lord, justify you, and your brethren of my church, in befriending that law which is the constitutional law of the land;
'And as pertaining to laws of man, whatsoever is more or less than these, cometh of evil.
'I, the Lord God, make you free, therefore ye are free indeed; and the law also maketh you free;
'Nevertheless, when the wicked fule the people mourn.'

It will be here observed that laws which are 'constitutional, supporting that principle of freedom in maintaining rights and privileges,' are to be sustained. The Edmunds Act is infamously opposed to the liberties and privileges of those against whom it is aimed. Therefore it 'cometh of evil' they can do so and take the consequences. But they should not be so inconsistent as to put forth the flimsy claim that their course is sustained by the revelations of the Almighty. They had better acknowledge that their faith in revelation has dwindled to a fine point, if it ever existed in their breasts at all, until it is scarcely discernable. They should at once proclaim themselves as unbelievers in the claim that the revelation on celestial marriage is of divine origin, or else admit that they do not possess the courage of their convictions.

But we are not yet through with treating upon the quotations sometimes referred to by the weak-backed who need a ramrod fastened parallel with their spinal column, and occasionally manifest a desire to see the stiffening taken out of others. A favorite passage used by such will be found on page 435 of the same work from which we have already extracted. Here it is:

'Verily, verily I say unto you, That when I give a commandment to any of the sons of men, to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might, and with all they have to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them, and hinder them from performing that work; behold, it behoveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

'And the iniquity and transgression of my holy laws and commandments, I will visit upon the heads of those who hindered my work, unto the third and fourth generation, so long as they repent not, and hate me, saith the Lord God.'

'Therefore for this cause have I accepted the offerings of those whom I commanded to build up a city and a house unto my name, in Jackson county, Missouri, and were hindered by their enemies, saith the Lord your God.'

It is a little singular that some people will persistently refuse to see the difference between a certain special work and a principle of law. The consistency of the Lord relieving a people from any such obligation as the building of a house when prevented by enemies from accomplishing it is self-evident. When it comes to the abrogation of a law, a principle, a truth, the matter is entirely different. The revelation does not apply even remotely to the present situation.

We will now take the Saints living in Idaho, to illustrate the extent to which the policy of abrogation under pressure would go, if applied after the fashion desired by some people we wot [sic] of. Our brethren of the north are oppressed unbearably, not only on account of the practice of plural marriage, but for
their belief in its rightfulness. According to the doctrine of the compromisers belief in the correctness of a principle would have to be given up. By what process this species of relinquishment could be attained does not, however, appear, the operation being to all intents, a mental impossibility.¹

The willingness of some members of the Church to talk of compromise during the years of the anti-polygamy conflict was, to a certain extent, a corollary of the efforts to acquire statehood. It was felt that one avenue of escape from the seemingly "irrepressible conflict" would be to secure statehood which, once achieved, would relieve some of the pressure against the Latter-day Saint population. It was soon apparent, however, that such efforts would fall upon deaf ears unless, as a prerequisite, some assurance was given that the saints would discontinue the practice of plural marriage. The generally suggested methods of abandonment by those outside the faith, ranged from outright renunciation of the revelation on marriage, to proposals that the church "have another revelation" abolishing the practice. Brigham Young's reaction to this proposal in 1866 was as follows:

The Lord gave a revelation through Joseph Smith, his servant; and we have believed and practiced it. Now, then, it is said that this must be done away before we are permitted to receive our place as a State in the Union... Do you think that we shall ever be admitted as a State into the Union without denying the principle of polygamy? If we are not admitted until then we shall never be admitted.²

A few years later the issue of plural marriage again became a factor for consideration in an effort to gain statehood. It was felt that the year 1872 would be an opportune time to seek admission for Utah because of the uncertainty of the outcome of the presidential

¹Deseret Evening News, June 5, 1895.

²Brigham Young, Journal of Discourses (August 19, 1866), XI, 269.
election during that year, and since there was also some talk in the
dress of the country advocating that Utah be admitted.

In December, 1871, the leaders of the Church were confronted
with a proposal by the ex-secretary of the Territory of Utah, Frank
Fuller, which contemplated that a measure be forced into the forth-
coming convention by Gentiles and non-polygamous Mormons prohibiting
"the future extension of polygamy."¹

The convention that adjourned on February 19 is of little his-
torical significance except for the fact that an ordinance was drawn
up, to be submitted to congress, which would provide an opportunity
for that body to prescribe the terms, if any, that would be prerequisite
for admission as a state. "It was expected ... that congress would
insist upon a provision prohibiting polygamous marriages for the future,
and this condition precedent to statehood ... would have been sub-
mittted to the vote of the people."² The reaction of the Latter-day
Saint members of the convention toward this ordinance was varied, some
favoring it and others opposing it. Those who favored its retention
did so on the ground that it would "... give congress a chance to
admit us or show why we were not admitted."³ It was not their in-
tention, however, to surrender the doctrine of plural marriage for
statehood as was advocated by one non-Mormon member of the convention--
Thomas Pitch:

¹Roberts, Comprehensive History, V, 458-59. At a meeting of
the School of the Prophets on December 9, it was recorded: "President
Wells talked on polygamy—would not think it strange if God would take
that principle back to himself for a season, through the wickedness of
his people." (Ibid., p. 459.)

²Ibid., p. 462. ³Ibid., p. 463.
The question of State government or no state government for the people of Utah is simply a question of concession on the part of the people of Utah. I say a question of concession. I doubt indeed if it be longer than that. The universal voice of a democratic-republican nation of forty millions of people seems to be consolidated into a demand with respect to Utah, a demand which may perhaps be the offspring of prejudiced opinion, but if so, it is an opinion which will not be enlightened and which cannot be disregarded or over-ruled. The demand is that the future marriage laws and marriage relations of Utah be placed in consonance with the rest of the Republic. The demand is that polygamous or plural marriages shall cease. Accede to this demand and you may have a State government, with condonation of the past, and secure exemption from persecution for the future.¹

This sentiment, which prevailed to defeat the effort for statehood at this time, was the same as that evinced by governor George L. Woods in his message to the Legislature on January 27, 1872, and which echoed throughout the country: "All violations of the laws of Congress should cease; polygamy should be abandoned and laws should be enacted . . . in accordance with the laws of Congress upon that subject. Until that is done the people of Utah cannot expect nor should they ask admission as a State. . . ."²

Any contemplation, however, that statehood, if and when it came, would be preceded by a renunciation of plural marriage was ill-conceived. To the question, "Don't you think that when our Legislature meet they had better go to work and pass a law doing away with polygamy," John Taylor reacted,

... No; no such thought ever enters my mind; and as I said . . . this morning: We want no cowards in our ranks . . . no yielding up of principles that God has revealed. . . . We want

¹Orson F. Whitney, History of Utah (Salt Lake City: Cannon and Sons, 1892), II, 698. Fitch's speech was met by silence from the Latter-day Saint delegates: the only reaction being that of George Q. Cannon—that "he had been unconvinced." (Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, V, 461.)

²Salt Lake Tribune, January 27, 1872, p. 3.
no trembling in the knees, nor anything of that kind around us. Let those who hold such ideas go among the other class and advocate their views with them, but not with us. . . .

Addressing a congregation at Provo, George Q. Cannon observed that "there have been, and still are, perhaps, some who call themselves Latter-day Saints, who are almost ready to lend themselves to any scheme that has for its object the obtaining of a State organization for Utah. . . ." He continued:

... Such persons look upon this as so great a blessing and so great a boon, that they are almost willing to forego their religious belief and to pander to those who have got power, and to make some sort of a concession to them, in order to achieve this, what they consider, very desirable end. There has been some agitation in years past respecting plural marriage, and some people, calling themselves Latter-day Saints, have been almost ready to go into the open market, and bid for a State government, at the price of conceding this principle of our religion, for the privilege of becoming a State of the Union. . . . They are ready to sell out their belief as Latter-day Saints, and their veneration and reverence for that power which God has restored, for the sake of obtaining a little recognition of their rights as citizens on the part of those in power. It does not require much familiarity with the Spirit of God, or with the principles of our holy religion to understand exactly the position that such persons as these to whom I allude, occupy among us. When a man is ready to barter any principle of salvation for worldly advantage, that man certainly has reached the position that he esteems worldly advantage above eternal salvation. . . .

Although statehood was looked upon as a desirable goal, the belief that motivated the policy of "no yielding of principles that God has revealed," was expressed by George Q. Cannon:

... I believe there is an overruling Providence in all these affairs; I believe the Lord is watching over this people, and that he is controlling and shaping events and circumstances, and managing everything connected with the affairs of this nation, and our affairs as part of the nation, with a view to accomplish his great designs and purposes. And whenever it shall be wisdom in his sight that we should have our political condition changed

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1John Taylor, Journal of Discourses (December 9, 1883), XXVI, 355.

2George Q. Cannon, Ibid. (November 20, 1884), XXVI, 7-8.
and our Territory become a State, it will be effected. And it will come, too, as easily as other changes that have been wrought out and that at one time seemed exceedingly improbable. So that it is not necessary that we should become excited or impatient or indulge in too much anxiety concerning such things, but leave them in the hands of Him who has up to the present time controlled all things for the good of his people and for the bringing to pass of his own purposes.\footnote{T. Cannon, *Ibid.* (July 7, 1878), XX, 33.}

After the enactment of the Edmunds law in 1882, the demands for compromise increased to the extent that by 1885, it was predicted that the Church would concede to the pressure by issuing a "revelation" to abandon plural marriage. This, the *Deseret News* labelled a "Phantasmal Anticipation":\footnote{``Deseret News Weekly, April 1, 1887, p. 167."

\ldots It is being predicted by some of the rabid persecutors of the "Mormons" that the Church will, by the relentless application of a remorseless squeezing process, be forced into making certain concessions. According to this new class of prophets the anticipated conceding will consist of the renunciation of certain tenets of the faith of the Latter-day Saint--notably the doctrine of plural marriage. It is expected that this abrogation of a prominent religious principle will be brought about by a revelation emanating from the head of the Church.

We feel called upon to treat this lately expressed expectation to a cold bath. It has not the most fragile basis upon which to rest. It is conceived in error, and consequently cannot be realized. Those who indulge in it have no conception of the character of the Church. They demonstrate by their predictions that they imagine it to have originated in and to be conducted by fraud. On the contrary the Church was organized and established under divine commandment, and is carried forward by the will and direction of God.

When men talk so flippantly about revelations setting up one doctrine or uprooting another, they speak in ignorance. It is the province of the Head of the body-religious to receive revelation to the Church or for its benefit and instruction, but he is not the source of these communications. He is the medium through whom they are given. From the standpoint of a Latter-day Saint thoroughly imbued with the faith and spirit of the Gospel, prognostications from outside sources to the effect that a revelation either establishing or repudiating a doctrinal point would be received either in the near or distant future is exceedingly absurd. They could only be based on the erroneous estimate that revelations
can be cut, dried or made to order according to the will of man. On the contrary they express the will of God given through the channel which He has appointed, as in days of old. And every true disciple is entitled to possess sufficient of the spirit by which they are given to enable him to understand and receive the revelations of God when they are presented to him, and to detect without difficulty the spurious article, should anything of that character be offered. Those who do not possess that spirit, or witness, are liable to fall, because they are open to deception.

Speaking from the basis that the revelation on celestial or patriarchal marriage was given of God, what an absurdity is here presented of people indulging in the vain anticipation that Omnipotence would yield by the process of obliteration of a divine law on account of human pressure. God having given the doctrine, for a wise purpose known to himself suffers those who have sought to do His will and incidentally others who have not advanced in that direction, to be placed at a temporary disadvantage, for it is necessary that men should be tried, that they may be proven, and proven that they may be educated. Doubtless when the object for which the present crusade has in the providence of the Almighty, been permitted, is accomplished, He will overrule it for the advances and benefit of those who have not flinched nor proved recreant during the ordeal; but no revelation from man will ever set aside any doctrine of the Church. Man of himself has no power in the premises. If that which has been divinely appointed is abrogated, that process must be operated by the same power. No other can touch it. It is not within merely human province. In the light of this position it is positive folly for men to talk about a revelation being given upon any point connected with the Church, as nothing but a revelation in advance of the one anticipated could enable any mortal man to know anything at all upon such a subject.

The absurdity of yielding to the anti-polygamy pressure by "abandoning" the practice of plural marriage was further expressed by George Q. Cannon in an editorial appearing in the May 1, 1885, issue of the Juvenile Instructor:

... Just now we are passing through a trial which causes many to think and to wonder what the result will be, and there may be some, perhaps, who tremble and whose faith almost fails them. A violent and vicious attack is being made upon the doctrine and practice of patriarchal marriage. Those who have practiced this principle are assailed with a ferocity never before known. Those who make the attack, perhaps hope to drive the people of God to renounce the doctrine and promise not to obey the revelation. Vain and delusive hope! Unless the Saints apostatize, such an action on their part is impossible. By doing so they would deliberately shut the door of the celestial glory in their own faces. They would say by their actions: 'We
do not have the valor necessary to sustain us in striving for the celestial glory.¹ To comply with the request of our enemies would be to give up all hope of ever entering into the glory of God, the Father, and Jesus Christ, the Son. This is the prize which the Saints are asked to give for the world to cease their attacks upon them! Is it not a costly bargain which they are asked to make? To barter off eternal felicity with their wives and children in the celestial kingdom and presence of God and the Lamb for the miserable favor of the world? So intimately interwoven is this precious doctrine with the exaltation of men and women in the great hereafter that it cannot be given up without giving up at the same time all hope of immortal glory. . . .¹

Despite the methodical manner by which large numbers of "polygamists" were being fined and imprisoned under the provisions of the Edmunds Act, a clamor arose for more stringent legislation. The result was the Edmunds-Tucker Act of 1887, the last anti-polygamy legislation passed by the Congress of the United States. This bill became law on March 3, 1887, and included the following main features:

It dissolved the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints as a corporation, and also the Emigration Fund Company and the Nauvoo Legion. It abolished woman suffrage in the Territory of Utah and provided for a test oath to be administered to all voters, which was geared to disfranchise any male who refused to obey the laws of the land, especially the law of March 22, 1882. Church property in excess of $50,000.00 was to be forfeited to the United States except those buildings and grounds used exclusively for the worship of God. This property was to be disposed of by the Secretary of the Interior for the use and benefit of the common schools in the Territory. All probate judges in Utah were thereafter to be appointed by the President of the United States, with the advice and consent of the Senate.²

¹Juvenile Instructor, May 1, 1885, p. 136.
A statement in the New York Daily Tribune was typical of the sentiment of the country as a whole toward the Edmunds-Tucker act: "The new bill is fair notice to the Mormons that they have reached the limit of national endurance. They will, if they are wisely counselled, accept the inevitable, and abandon polygamy."¹

Commenting on the same legislation, the Deseret News said:

As for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the object of assault, it will remain unsuppressed by this or any other infamous scheme that can be concocted to cripple or destroy it. There is nothing in such futile efforts that can change one of its tenets or take from it any of its powers. It will become more consolidated than ever because of the outward pressure to which its members are subjected by persecution.²

In 1887, a feeling of restiveness toward the practice of plural marriage was again manifest among the Latter-day Saints. This is seen from ". . . the number of those who were willing, against the general policy of the church leaders, to promise obedience to the anti-polygamy laws for the future and thus escape punishment. . . ."³ The proposed constitution for the State of Utah, drawn up in June and July of that year, contained a section which declared bigamy and polygamy ". . . incompatible with a republican form of government," and ". . . hereby forbidden and declared a misdemeanor."⁴ It was further decreed that this provision would be unrepealable and unamendable except as directed by the Congress and President of the United States. Submitted to a vote, the Constitution, including the anti-polygamy

¹New York Daily Tribune, June 20, 1884, p. 4.
²Deseret News, February 19, 1887, p. 2.
³Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 155-56, 217.
⁴Ibid., p. 282.
section, was accepted by a majority of 13,195 to 504.

This effort for statehood failed mainly because the action of the constitutional convention declaring polygamy to be a "misdemeanor" did not bear the official sanction that the country felt was necessary to satisfy the law.\(^{1}\) The Chicago Tribune commented on the subject as follows:

\[\ldots\] The proposed Constitution is a flimsy, transparent trick. Once in the Union polygamy and every other domestic institution would be relegated to the control of the State forever. To admit Utah with the Constitution would be a monstrous blunder or something worse. She would at once slip from under jurisdiction of Congress so far as her domestic affairs are concerned. When polygamy is dead it will be time to admit her, if she wants to come.\(^{2}\)

The Salt Lake Tribune also commented on the proposed constitution of 1897:

\[\ldots\] But, does the article actually, in terms, abolish polygamy? It does not. It simply declared, in obscure words, bigamy and polygamy to be a misdemeanor, and it is evidently contemplated that no legislation shall be had to enforce the article. It is, in effect, stated that there need be no such legislation, and we all know that the Mormons would never enact an effective statute on the subject, even should such legislation be enjoined.

As to unlawful cohabitation, which is the most prevalent and offensive practice in vogue, it is not mentioned in this precious article, and all that a Mormon would need to do in order to 'live his religion' would be to quietly marry polygamously and keep the knowledge of the fact from obtrusively offending a Mormon prosecuting attorney for three years, and from thereafter he could live shameless and indigent polygamy with neither law nor constitution to say him nay.\(^{3}\)

The New York Times was more specific in its solution to the problem—expressing a demand which became very frequent in the ensuing

\(^{1}\)Ibid.

\(^{2}\)Chicago Tribune, January 20, 1888, as quoted in Salt Lake Tribune, January 27, 1888, p. 2.

\(^{3}\)Salt Lake Tribune, July 6, 1897, p. 2.
years: "Utah should not be admitted to the Union until the Mormon Church formally renounces the doctrine of polygamy and the people have abandoned the practice for a period sufficient to guarantee that both the doctrine and practice have been absolutely given up. . . ."\(^1\)

In the closing months of 1888 and early 1889 proposals were made to the church leaders advising an official abandonment of plural marriage. George Q. Cannon remarked:

I have ever been assured hundreds of times, by men, too, of wisdom and discernment, that our overthrow was inevitable unless we conformed to the demands of public opinion and renounced all peculiarities of faith; that the world was arrayed against us, and that it was folly to suppose we could withstand these continued assaults upon us.\(^2\)

Wilford Woodruff also stated that he had been called upon by friends outside of the church, ". . . and urged to take some steps with regard to this matter. They knew the course which the government was determined to take. This feeling has also been manifested more or less by members of the Church."\(^3\)

Although the church leaders strongly supported the movement for statehood, they did not, however, sanction the renunciation of plural marriage as a prerequisite. Upon the presentation of a proposal in 1889 that plural marriage be officially abandoned, "... the proposition was unanimously rejected by the apostles--then the presiding council of the church."\(^4\) This sentiment is further reflected in the statement of Wilford Woodruff after being sustained as President of the Church at the April conference in 1889:

\(^1\)Quoted in ibid., July 9, 1887, p. 1.

\(^2\)Cited in Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 218.

\(^3\)Ibid. \(^4\)Ibid., VI, 282-83.
... can I afford to ... turn away from that which the Lord has required at my hands, because it does not suit the world? I cannot. I have got to meet my acts before the throne of God, and so have this nation and all the inhabitants of the earth. ... They will understand then that there is a power above them, and that is the God of heaven. ...  

In his first report to Washington in November, 1889, the newly-appointed governor of Utah, A. L. Thomas, also reflected the feeling that although some Latter-day Saints were disposed to compromise, "... the sincere Mormons will never renounce polygamy until they are convinced that God has commanded it. ..."  

By 1889 the active practice of plural marriage, which had characterized the earlier years of the decade, had subsided to the extent that few if any such marriages were being contracted. Franklin S. Richards, the Church's legal counselor, testifying before the House Committee on Territories on January 12, stated that "polygamy ... cannot be shown to have a present existence in Utah. ... There is positively no proof whatever of newly contracted polygamous marriages."  

And the Utah Commission, in its report of September 30, 1887, observed that "... the practice of polygamy appears to be declining and in the course of ultimate abandonment. ..."  

It was apparently felt that such a course would stop the anti-polygamy pressure short of the demands that the principle of plural marriage be renounced altogether.  

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1Deseret News Weekly, April 19, 1890, p. 561.  
2Salt Lake Tribune, November 5, 1889, p. 5.  
4Cited in ibid., p. 276.  
5Although the speeches of the leaders of the church after 1886 continued to require "implicit obedience" to the commandments of God, there are few, if any, direct references to the practice of plural marriage as compared to previous years. The statement of Heber J. Grant
In an effort to further alleviate some of the pressure against the Church, an official statement was issued to the press on December 21, 1889, in which false reports against the Church were strongly denied and the main points of the Mormon question past and present were reviewed. This appeal was signed by the First Presidency and Quorum of Twelve, but had no apparent effect in relieving the anti-Mormon pressure.

Two days later, on the eighty-fourth anniversary of the birth of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Saints observed a special day of fasting and prayer. They were admonished to supplicate the Lord that his Holy Spirit would be poured out upon them as a witness that he was still with them.

... Also that the enemies of Zion might be confounded in their wicked works and designs, and that the hearts of the rulers and people of the United States might be softened to the end that they might be induced to deal justly and mercifully with the saints, and be willing to hear their cause and grant to them those rights and privileges which belong to citizens who are true to the Constitution and institutions of the United States. "All this," said the announcement, 'should be done in the spirit of meekness and faith. There ought to be no expressions or desires for wrath and judgment upon those who have persecuted, reviled, and falsely accused us, and who seek to oppress us, but rather that they may turn from their wicked ways and be led to do right.'

Following this special day the Deseret News observed:

The spectacle of a devoted, God-fearing people, including men, women and children, devoting a day to such a purpose as that for

at the October, 1889, conference is typical: "In order to progress symmetrically we must conform to all of the requirements of the Gospel. A man taking another course may develop in any one direction, but when the day of reckoning comes he will be found wanting, not having improved all his talents." (Deseret News, October 5, 1889, p. 4.)

1Cited in Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 218-19.
which yesterday was set apart was of a nature to move with sympathy even the hearts of those who have occupied the place of a scoffer. Many of the worshippers shed tears of joy under the melting influence that prevailed. The prayers that were offered entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, who listened to the cry of the people and assured them by the voice of the Spirit that He had not forgotten Zion, neither would He neglect her in the hour of peril.1

The results, however, were not immediately discernible. Perhaps, as Roberts suggests, this day of supplication had the effect of preparing the Saints themselves "... in mind and heart for the mighty change then pending."2 The only consolation that could be seen at that time was expressed in the Deseret News five days later:

In passing through the events under the shadows of which the Church is now lying, it will be purified as by fire. But during the ordeal it will need the help and guidance of Jehovah, as will each and every one of its members. A strong combination of opposing powers has been formed for the purpose of waging upon the Saints a warfare designed to result in their destruction; and the handful of people who are thus threatened and imperiled, can look to no earthly source of power for help, or even sympathy, and must rely upon the God whom they worship and their own efforts aided by Him who rules on high.3

By the summer of 1890 several things bore witness to the fact that something would soon have to give way in the onslaught against the Church. The constitutionality of the Idaho test oath had been affirmed by the Supreme Court of the United States on February 3, and in April of that year, Shelby Cullom introduced a bill in Congress that would apply that oath to Utah. The property of the Church had been escheated to the US government, which action was also pronounced constitutional by the Supreme Court on May 18, 1890. Efforts to escape public pressure by securing statehood for Utah had failed; and

1Deseret News Weekly, January 4, 1890, p. 46.
2Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 219.
Furthermore, hundreds of the leading men of the Church were in prison and hundreds more were in exile. In November, 1839, the courts had decreed that Mormon aliens could not become citizens of the United States.

In addition to this, the first few months of 1890 saw a false report circulating through the country to the effect that President Wilford Woodruff, in the general conference of the Church in October, 1839, had announced that divine revelation had ceased—that enough had now been given for the guidance of the Church and that no more need be expected. This report found its way into the halls of Congress when Senator Dubois of Idaho repeated it before the House Committee on Territories during consideration of the anti-Mormon disfranchisement bill. Dubois even went so far as to promise to produce the Conference proceedings containing the alleged statement. His apparent hope was to show that if no more revelation was forthcoming, one need not look for a relinquishment of the practice of plural marriage.

In an effort to disprove this fallacy, the Deseret News reproduced the part of President Woodruff's speech in question—-noting that the Senator did not produce the promised report, because it was an "impossible" feat. The editorial continued:

The doctrine of present revelation is fundamental to the 'Mormon' system. It is the light and life of 'Mormonism.' All its doctrines, ordinances and commandments were revealed from on high. Without divine revelation it would be little different, in a short time, from the lifeless creeds and institutions of modern Christendom. Its great distinctive feature is instant divine communion. Eliminate that, and its occupation would be gone. If any President or leader were to make such an announcement as that attributed to the venerable head of the Church, he would be rejected by the body and no longer wield any influence among the
you each a living testimony for yourselves? If you have not,
now is the time to put yourselves in the position to know
whether or not God is guiding His Church today. We profess that
He has restored the everlasting Gospel, and has bestowed the
Holy Ghost on us. If we have the Holy Ghost, God is with us,
and by that Holy Ghost we should know when we are right.

The gifts of revelation and prophecy are bestowed upon all
who receive the Gospel in sincerity. Everyone who has endeavored
to live the life of a Saint can testify that these gifts are
with the Church. We should live so that each can stand for him-
self. It is not the design of God to save the people in a mass,
without the exercise of their own volition. It is not His de-
sign that we should be led blindly; it is for each one to have a
testimony and act for himself. . . .

At the Cache Stake Conference held in Logan on August 3, 1890,
President Woodruff expressed his belief that ". . . the Lord will
never permit any man upon whose shoulders He places the authority and
power to lead Israel, to go astray, or to lead the children of God
from the path of duty. The Lord would remove such a man from his
place. . . ." And, at the same conference, George Q. Cannon made
this statement:

. . . the guide that God has given unto the Presidency of this
Church, and unto the Apostles, and unto all who stand in respon-
sible stations, is the Spirit of God, the Holy Ghost. It is by
its guidance and by the light which it gives that this Church is
led. And it is obtained by waiting patiently for the Lord to
make known His will and preparing ourselves for it, asking Him to
give it. It comes then in power. It comes with clearness of the
light of the sun. It comes overpoweringly, so that there can be
no doubt left in the mind as to the correctness of the course.
In this way this Church has been led from the beginning. It is
being led in that manner now, and it will be led in that manner
until Jesus himself shall come.

Although the situation in Utah, in the eyes of many Letter-
day Saint and non-Mormon observers, had long been such as to warrant

1 Deseret News Weekly, July 5, 1890, p. 57. See also, Ibid.,
March 8, 1890, p. 362; March 15, 1890, pp. 377ff.

2 Ibid., August 30, 1890, p. 305.

3 Ibid., October 4, 1890, p. 485.
the relinquishment of the practice of plural marriage, it was felt by the Church leaders that "at no time has the Spirit seemed to indicate that this should be done."\(^1\) By 1890, however, it was evident that only extraordinary action would preserve the Church from an intensification of the conflict that had already deprived it of some of its temporal and spiritual effectiveness.

It was on September 25, 1890, that President Wilford Woodruff, faced with the necessity "of acting for the temporal salvation of the Church,"\(^2\) issued his now famous declaration advising the Latter-day Saints to "refrain from contracting any marriages forbidden by the law of the land."\(^3\) To those who felt that the action of the Church had not come soon enough, the reply was, "... we have waited for the Lord to move in the matter."\(^4\) To many others whose faith was severely tried by the relinquishment of the practice, came this advice:

"... Go unto God yourselves, if you are tried over this and cannot see its purpose; ... and ... you will not come away empty. ..."\(^5\)

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\(^1\)Consult *infra*, p. 182.

\(^2\)*Infra*, p. 176.

\(^3\)*Infra*, p. 177.

\(^4\)*Infra*, p. 182.

\(^5\)*Infra*, p. 183.
CHAPTER VII

THE PRACTICE OF PLURAL MARRIAGE--AN EVALUATION

... Doubtless when the object for which the present crusade has in the providence of the Almighty, been permitted, is accomplished, He will overrule it for the advancement and benefit of those who have not flinched nor proved recreant during the ordeal. But no revelation from man will ever set aside any doctrine of the Church. Man of himself has no power in the premises. If that which has been divinely appointed is abrogated, that process must be operated by the same power. No other can touch it. It is not within merely human province. In the light of this position it is positive folly for men to talk about a revelation being given upon any point connected with the Church, as nothing but a revelation in advance of the one anticipated could enable any mortal man to know anything at all upon such a subject.1

Since the suspension of the practice of plural marriage by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in 1890, there have been efforts to show that such marriages are, nevertheless, still divinely sanctioned among a select few. This idea currently prevails among "Fundamentalist" dissenters from the Latter-day Saint Church.2 The theological basis for this position rests upon the following premises: A) that the practice of plural marriage is necessary for all those who wish to obtain the highest exaltation in the kingdom of God; B) that the practice is a fundamental principle of the gospel--destined never to be abrogated or suspended; C) that prior to its suspension in 1890, a special dispensation of authority was bestowed upon a select

1Deseret News Weekly, April 1, 1885, p. 167.
2Consult Supra, Chapter V.
group of individuals to perpetuate the practice ". . . from one
generation to another without church consent. . . ."¹

In support of the argument that the practice of plural
marriage is divinely sanctioned today because it is a prerequisite to
the highest exaltation, "Fundamentalist" literature is profusely aug-
mented with excerpts from Latter-day Saint Church literature during
the zealous defense of the doctrine of plural marriage which accom-
panied the polygamy crusade of the last century. Two previously cited
statements by Brigham Young are typical of this: "Now where a man in
this Church says, 'I don't want but one wife; I will have my religion
with one,' he will perhaps be saved in the Celestial kingdom; but when
he gets there he will not find himself in possession of any wife at
all. . . ."² And further,

. . . if you desire with all your hearts to obtain the bless-
sings which Abraham obtained, you will be polygamists at least
in your faith, or you will come short of enjoying the salvation
and glory which Abraham has obtained. . . . The only men who
become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter polygamy.
Others attain unto a glory and may even be permitted to come into
the presence of the Fether and the Son; but they cannot reign as
kings in glory, because they had blessings offered unto them,
and they refused to accept them.³

Statements of this sort abound in "Fundamentalist" literature
and they have a rather impressive appearance when viewed out of con-
text; but to apply them as sanction for present-day plural marriages
is an untenable interpretation of Latter-day Saint Church history.
This is illustrated from the fact that whereas plural marriages were
divinely sanctioned among certain people, others were restricted to

¹Supra, p. 104.
²Supra, p. 94.
³Supra, p. 94-95.
one wife.

Certain ancient prophets, recorded Joseph Smith, were justified of the Lord in practicing the principle of plural marriage because "... it was the law ... and in nothing did they sin, save in those things which they received not of me,"¹ indicating that the rightfulness of the practice rested upon divine sanction, and was not regarded as an irrevocable decree. This also was the case with the ancient inhabitants of America, as recorded in the Book of Mormon, whom the Lord commanded, "... there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife. ... For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, I will command my people; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things. ..."² That this injunction was not limited to the ancients alone, was emphasized by Orson Pratt in 1853:

... So it is in this Church of Latter-day Saints: every man is strictly limited to one wife, unless the Lord, through the President and Prophet of the Church, gives a revelation permitting him to take more. Without such a revelation it would be sinful, according to the Book of Mormon, which this Church are [sic] required to obey. ...

... No man in Utah, who already has a wife, and who may desire to obtain another, has any right to make any propositions of marriage to a lady, until he has consulted the President over the whole Church, and through him, obtains a revelation from God, as to whether it would be pleasing in His sight. If he is forbidden by revelation, that ends the matter. ...³

On the subject of authority to solemnize plural marriages, Joseph Smith stated on October 5, 1843: "... I hold the keys of this power in the last days; for there is never but one on earth at a time

¹Doctrine and Covenants 132:34, 38.
²Book of Mormon, Jacob 2:27, 30.
on whom the power and its keys are conferred; and I have constantly said no man shall have but one wife at a time, unless the Lord directs otherwise."

The importance of the position of the President of the Church in directing the practice of plural marriage was also expressed by Orson Pratt during the official announcement of the doctrine in 1852:

"... there is but one man in all the world, at the same time, who can hold the keys of this matter; but one man has power to turn the key to inquire of the Lord, and to say whether I, or these my brethren, or any of the rest of this congregation, or the Saints upon the face of the whole earth, may have this blessing of Abraham conferred upon them. ...

... the Lord has set bounds and restrictions to these things. He has told us ... that only one man can hold these keys upon the earth at the same time; and they belong to that man who stands at the head to preside over all the affairs of the Church and kingdom of God in the last days. ..."

It was to those who hesitated and in some cases openly rebelled, after having been commanded to accept the doctrine of plural marriage "at least in faith," that the censure came regarding their future exaltation. That this chastisement did not dogmatically apply to all Latter-day Saints in all ages of the world, is seen from this statement of George Q. Cannon:

"... There might be circumstances and situations in which it would not be wisdom in the mind of God for His people to practice this principle. ... If we, as a people, had attempted to practice this principle without revelation, it is likely that we should have been led into grievous sins, and the condemnation of God would have rested upon us. ..."

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1 Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, VI, 46.
2 Orson Pratt, Journal of Discourses (August 29, 1852), I, 63-64. See also supra, p. 46.
3 Consult supra, p. 111-113.
4 George Q. Cannon, Journal of Discourses (October 9, 1869), XIII, 202. Further indication that the practice of plural marriage was
According to this, a Latter-day Saint would be as liable to lose his exaltation by practicing the principle of plural marriage under certain circumstances as he would by not practicing it in others—the determining factor being, as Joseph Smith stated, "... the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed."¹

In turning to the "Fundamentalist" assertion that the revelation on plural marriage was an irrevocable decree and as such was not destined to be suspended or abrogated, the evidence cited is also derived by extracting certain excerpts from the history of the Church during the anti-polygamy crusade, giving them a special interpretation, and applying them to present day circumstances. An example of this is the statement of John W. Taylor, in which he observed that there had been some talk of the President of the Church issuing a revelation abolishing the principle of plural marriage:

"... when a revelation of that kind is given it will be when the Lord has no use for the Latter-day Saints, and this will never transpire." "Fundamentalists" reason from this, that if a revelation abolishing plural marriage was never to transpire, then the Manifesto of 1890 must have been a fraud. The same deduction is applied to a supposed revelation to John Taylor in 1886, in which the Lord is quoted as saying "... I have not revoked this law, plural marriage

¹ Consult, infra, p. 151.
nor will I, for it is everlasting. . . . "

It has already been noted that commensurate with the campaign to eradicate plural marriage, there arose an outcry that the Saints should renounce "both the doctrine and the practice," and thereby save themselves from the impending consequences. Not only did some of the anti-polygamy crusaders prescribe the means by which the campaign should end, but they also suggested the model—"a revelation emanating from the head of the Church." A review of the statements of the Church leaders during that time indicates that it was to dispel the misconception that divine revelation could be regulated by the vacillating whims of public opinion that evoked statements such as that of John Taylor quoted above. With this in mind, any application of such statements, as sanction for present day polygamous living, is forced.

Further evidence, for the "Fundamentalists," that the command to practice plural marriage was an irrevocable decree, is derived from statements directed by the Church leaders to a certain group of Saints who sought to relieve the tension of the anti-polygamy crisis by advocating that "the correctness of the principle of plural marriage . . . be given up" at least for a "short season." Such statements as these: "... it would be quite as proper to propose

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1Supra, p. 95. Actually, the Manifesto of 1890 suspended the practice, but it did not revoke the law of plural marriage. Consult, infra., p. 195.)

2Consult, supra, p. 136. See also pp. 129-30.

3Supra, pp. 114, 131, 135-36.

4Supra, p. 127. See also, pp. 124, 129-30.

5Supra, p. 124. In seeking scriptural support for their
apostasy for a short season until public opinion would become more favorable to us,"¹ and ". . . when a man is ready to barter any principle of salvation for worldly advantage, that man certainly has reached the position that he esteems worldly advantage above eternal salvation,"² when reviewed in the context in which they were spoken, are meager evidence that the speakers were warning against the suspension of plural marriage under all circumstances. The best indication of this is the fact that during the time when pressure groups from without were advocating that the Church receive a "new revelation," and compromisers from within were suggesting that the "principle be given up" for a short time, the probability of further change in the law of plural marriage was not ruled out:

. . . Doubtless when the object for which the present crusade has in the providence of the Almighty, been permitted, is accomplished, He will overrule it for the advancement and benefit of

position, "compromisers" of the principle of plural marriage during the 1880's referred to the statement in the Doctrine and Covenants 124:49-50: ". . . when I the Lord give a commandment to any of the sons of men to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might . . . to perform that work, . . . and their enemies come upon them and hinder them . . . behold, it behooveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, . . ." They were chastised, however, on the ground that the passage applied specifically to the building of a temple which the saints were prevented from carrying out--the reference having no application to "a principle of law." (Consult supra, p. 126.) The absurdity of using this passage in support of an abandonment of plural marriage was pointed out by the Deseret News in 1895. (Consult, Supra, P. 124-127.) "Fundamentalists" do not hesitate to point out that ". . . if the principle did not apply at that time, [1835] it did not apply at the time of the issuance of the Manifesto [1890], nor can it apply today. . . ." (Truth, October, 1949, p. 119.) It should be noted, however, that when the same scripture was cited by George Q. Cannon in support of the Manifesto at the October Conference, 1890, (See Infra, p. 151.) he was not advocating that the "correctness of the principle be given up" as was the case which evoked the foregoing reproof.

¹Supra, p 124.
²Supra, p 130.
of those who have not flinched nor proved recreant during the ordeal. But no revelation from man will ever set aside any doctrine of the Church. . . . If that which has been divinely appointed is abrogated, that process must be operated by the same power. No other can touch it. It is not within merely human province. . . .1

A review of Latter-day Saint Church history indicates that the determining factor in the practice of plural marriage is divine revelation, not an appeal to the past. This is reflected in a statement by Joseph Smith:

That which is wrong under one circumstance, may be, and often is right under another. . . . This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed. . . .2

Perhaps the most significant "Fundamentalist" claim pertaining to authority to practice plural marriage today is the assertion that under the direction of the resurrected Joseph Smith, a special dispensation of authority was bestowed upon a select group of five individuals on September 27, 1836, to perpetuate the practice of plural marriage independent of the Latter-day Saint Church. The source of information for this assertion is a statement of Lorin C. Woolley issued in 1929, which has already been quoted in its entirety in connection with the claims of the "Fundamentalists" in Chapter V.3

The credibility of the Woolley account, and with it the basis of the "Fundamentalist" system, may be called into question on the ground that Lorin Woolley was the only one of the five men involved in the above-mentioned transferral of authority that recorded the event,

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1Supra, pp. 131-32. See also pp. 115, 141.
2Joseph Smith, Jr., Documentary History of the Church, V, 135.
and this was not until 1929, after the rest of those concerned in
the matter were dead, and five years after he, himself, had been ex-
communicated from the Church. This, of course, is not conclusive
evidence. The argument does, however, become more convincing upon a
perusal of the statements of others who were supposed to have wit-
essed the momentous birth of "Fundamentalism," as described in the
Woolley account. For example, there is no suggestion in the journal
of Samuel Bateman (who, according to Woolley was one of the five
recipients of authority to continue plural marriages) of the events
in which he was supposed to have participated on September 26-27,
1886. The full record of the two days in question as recorded in
Bateman's journal is as follows:

the 26 Sunday. At Do,¹ all day reading. Had meeting, Bishop H.
B. Clawson presiding, 12 present and 3 children. I spoke. All
the rest of the Brethren spoke. Had a good meeting. H. B.
Clawson and J. E. Taylor went home at night.
the 27 All day at Do, reading, pitching quoits. Helped load two
loads of Barley. At night went with the mail. Called at Sister
B's, met A. Burt, sheriff of Salt Lake County. Got back at two
o'clock all right.²

According to Lorin Woolley's account, several persons, includ-
ing Samuel Bateman, had assembled with President Taylor on Sunday the
twenty-sixth to consider the advisability of issuing a "Manifesto"
relinquishing the practice of plural marriage. Although Bateman records
a meeting for that day, it is doubtful that it was anything more than

¹During the heat of the anti-polygamy campaign some of the
Church leaders went into "retirement" rather than submit to the indignity
of the law. Such was the course of President John Taylor from February,
1885, until his death on July 24, 1887. "Do" is a code name used by
Samuel Bateman in his journal to designate the "underground" hiding
place where he resided as a guard to President Taylor, which at this
time was the home of John W. Woolley in Centerville.

²"Diary of Samuel Bateman," (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young Uni-
versity Library, 1945), September 26-27, 1886, p. 5.
a regular Sunday service. This is evident from the casual manner in which the event is recorded, and also from the fact that he specifically lists fifteen persons, including three children, as being present, whereas Woolley names nine. Bateman, furthermore, makes no mention of a "manifesto" having been discussed, and concludes that they "had a good meeting." Woolley records that the proposed "Manifesto" was discussed at length, ". . . but we were unable to become united in the discussion. . . ."2

The "Fundamentalists" further claim that on the following day--September 27, 1836--a meeting was convened which lasted from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m. without intermission, at which Samuel Bateman was present. The assembly was purportedly highlighted by a renunciation of all future attempts to relinquish plural marriage; and President Taylor was filled with the Spirit of the Lord to the extent that his countenance shown, and he was, on more than one occasion, suspended in the air. Following the meeting, (which would have been after five p.m.) five copies of the previous night's revelation were written, after which five men, including Samuel Bateman, were authorized to perpetuate the practice of plural marriage. This allegedly took place in the presence of the Prophet Joseph Smith who "stood by directing the proceedings."3

Not only is Samuel Bateman's journal silent regarding the above events, but his record of having spent "all day" on the 27th, reading, pitching quoits and loading barley, further undermines the

1Supra, p. 99. 2Ibid. 3Supra, p. 102.
credulity of the Woolley account. ¹

When corroborated with a statement by George Earl, the fall-
lacy of the Woolley statement becomes even more apparent. George
Earl, a young convert from England, was employed in the Woolley house-
hold during the time that President Taylor was a resident there in
1896. During his lifetime² Earl was apparently approached many times
by "Fundamentalists" seeking his signature to a statement that would
substantiate the account of Lorin Woolley. The "Fundamentalist"
organ, Truth, even went so far as to note that

... George Earl in a recent interview, while disclaiming
a recollection of the details of the meeting referred to, with
emphasis stated that after a lifelong acquaintance with John W.
Woolley,³ Lorin C. Woolley and Daniel R. Bateman, he considers
them to be men of probity and strict honesty, and that their

¹Another of those implicated in the Woolley account is George
Q, Cannon. (Supra, pp. 101.) Although his journal was not available
for this study, there is evidence to believe that it would substan-
tiate the Bateman account.

²George Earl passed away on March 21, 1956.

³It is doubtful that John W. Woolley was involved in the
"Fundamentalist" movement to the extent that is claimed. Joseph
Fielding Smith, in a letter to the author dated July 13, 1956, made
the following statement: "I was well acquainted with John W. Woolley.
He was a good man but permitted himself to be drawn into the perform-
ing of a so-called 'plural marriage.' When this rumor first appeared,
John W. Woolley was called in to a session with the Council of the
Twelve, President Francis M. Lyman, presiding. Before that body he
denied that he had performed any plural ceremony and we accepted his
word, for we believed him to be a man who would not deceive the Twelve.
President Francis M. Lyman reported to President Joseph F. Smith the
fact that Brother Woolley had been before the Twelve and that he had
disclaimed any association with those who were engaged in this traffic.
My father replied to President Lyman that he was very grateful to
know that Brother Woolley was clear, for my father had the utmost con-
fidence in John W. Woolley.

"Some time later John W. Woolley was in the presence of Presi-
dent Joseph F. Smith, and President Smith said to him, 'John, I am
happy to know that you have not been involved in any of these so-called
plural marriages.' John W. Woolley hesitated a moment and then replied:
'President Smith I cannot lie to you. I am guilty.' Then he confessed
testimony on any question can be relied upon. . . 1

It was in refutation of such claims as this that George Earl issued the following statement on August 2, 1949:

Centerville, Utah
August 2nd, 1949

To whom it may concern:

I am making this statement of my own free will and choice, with no duress nor pressure from any person. And it is truthful and I hope will have a good effect.

... I have been approached during the past many years by scores of men endeavoring to secure my signature to a statement that I was at the meeting where President Taylor was purported to have stood in the air and delivered a powerful sermon upon a certain doctrine, and that heavenly messengers visited him, etc. Never did I see or hear any such things, and I doubt if anyone else did, but I hereby solemnly affirm that I saw nothing supernatural like that, nor heard such a sermon, and I firmly believe it could not have escaped my observation had it occurred.

I am absolutely now the sole survivor who was present during those eight months, and I feel it my duty to present these facts before the world, inasmuch as some aspersion has been cast upon my name by those seeking to subvert the truth. I always have had the feelings of the highest regard for all the Woolley family, and still do.

(Signed) George Earl 2

In addition to the five men who, according to Lorin Woolley, were authorized on September 27, 1886, to perpetuate plural marriages, we are informed that a sixth--Joseph F. Smith--"... was sent for and received a like commission from John Taylor, ..." 3 shortly before his death. The details of this account are also attributed to Lorin

his wrongdoing. Of course action had to be taken. One year later I met him on the Tabernacle grounds, and he said 'Brother Smith, when are the brethren going to permit me to come back in the Church?' My answer was that such a matter was for the First Presidency to decide."

1Supra, p. 103.

2On file in the Church Historian's office in Salt Lake City, Utah.

3A Priesthood Issue, p. 25.
Woolley:

During the closing days of the life of John Taylor, his second counselor, the late Joseph F. Smith, was laboring in the interest of his Church in the Hawaiian Islands. Seeing that his life was ebbing away, he delegated George Earl to proceed to the islands and notify his absent counselor that the president desired to see him for the purpose of conversing with and instructing him relating to important matters before he passed away. Upon this request both Joseph F. Smith and George Earl took passage on a sailing vessel and landed on one of the Pacific ports of the northwest instead of in California, where federal officers were on the watch to spy out their arrival. News of their landing in the northwest had filtered out and officers were stationed in Utah as well as in Idaho to ascertain their movements. Inasmuch as neither one of the two were informed as to these developments, it became necessary to send a second guide to accompany the travelers and bring them in a round-about way to the abode of the President of the Church. In order to secure this second guide, President John Taylor asked certain brethren, who were with him, to volunteer to perform the task required and impressed upon them the importance and responsibility, which a response to act would carry, inasmuch as not only the life of the one volunteering, but likewise the lives of those to be guided, were at stake. Lorin C. Woolley was the only one who volunteered, whereupon President Taylor requested him not to depart until he had called upon the Church head. When late in the evening of that day brother Woolley informed the President that he was equipped for the occasion and ready to start, the latter raised from the couch upon which he rested, placed his right hand upon the head of the volunteer and pronounced in substance the following upon him: "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I promise you that you will perform this mission whereunto you are called successfully, and return to your friends and loved ones in safety. You will live long and become mighty and strong in the Church and Kingdom of God. God bless you, good night." The mission was performed successfully and all three arrived at Kaysville, Utah, a few (7) days before President Taylor died. . . .

A comparison of this account with the descriptions of the return of Joseph F. Smith as recorded by L. John Nuttall and Samuel Bateman adds further evidence of the unreliability of Lorin Woolley on matters of Church history. John Nuttall, who was present at the Woolley residence on July 18, 1887, records:

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1As quoted in Francis M. Darter, "Keys of the Kingdom"--Where?, (n.p., 1945.) pp. 6-7.
... At 310 p.m. President Joseph F. Smith accompanied by Brothers Albert Davis and John W. Woolley drove up to our quarter. He having just arrived from the Sandwich Islands, and he having been met by these brethren under an arrangement gotten up by Pres' Geo. Q. Cannon. After greeting these brethren Prests Cannon and Smith went into the President's room and were with him and they alone. When President Cannon told President Taylor of Brother Joseph F.'s arrival and presence, and that now the First Presidency are again again [sic] together for the first time since December 1884. President Taylor said, though scarcely conscious, 'I feel to thank the Lord.' He appeared to recognize Prest Smith. ... 1

Samuel Bateman substantiates this account and adds a little light: "This afternoon Joseph F. Smith arrived here from the Sandwich Islands. Brother Albert Davis went and met him up in Idaho territory. Brother John Woolley met then at Brigham City and brought them here. ..." 2

In comparing the three accounts of the return of Joseph F. Smith, it is apparent that Lorin Woolley plays an "important and


2"Diary of Samuel Bateman," July 18, 1887, p. 59. The nature of President Taylor's health for at least a week prior to his death, further precludes the assertion that Joseph F. Smith "was sent for and received a like commission from John Taylor," as the five men on September 27, 1886. John Nuttall records the helplessness of President Taylor during the final week of his life: On Monday, July 18, 1887, the day Joseph F. Smith returned, he notes, "... When President Cannon told President Taylor of Brother Joseph F's arrival and presence, ... President Taylor said, though scarcely conscious, 'I feel to thank the Lord.' He appeared to recognize Prest Smith." The following day, Tuesday, July 19, Nuttall notes: "... He does not seem to comprehend what is going on around him. His mind is quite unsettled most of the time. ..." On Wednesday the 20th: "... The President has been very feeble to day, does not recognize any body ... gradually sinking. ..." Then, on Saturday, July 23, the day before his death, Nuttall records: "... The President ... has not opened his eyes since last Wednesday, and then only partially. ... He has not spoken since Thursday evening and then in a kind of rambling way. ..." (Diary of L. John Nuttall," I, 116-27.) July 18-25, 1887.
responsible" part in Church history only in that version of which he is the author.

An evaluation of the evidence by which plural marriages are purportedly still sanctioned today leaves little conclusion except that the proponents of such "authority" are apparently "without conscience as to truth, . . . seeking only to influence those who are uninformed and gullible."¹

CHAPTER VIII

THE MANIFESTO OF 1890—THE "FUNDAMENTALIST" VIEW

We hold that the Manifesto of Wilford Woodruff of 1890, allegedly discontinuing active adherence to this law, (plural marriage) was strictly a political measure, affecting only those who approved and accepted the same. It was addressed "TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN" and was set forth as a declaration of the personal views of Wilford Woodruff, who signed it and promulgated it as his personal advice to the Latter-day Saints, that they "refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the laws of the land." This document, prepared as it was, by a group of both Mormons and non-Mormons can in no wise be classed as a revelation from God. Its issuance, if sanctioned at all, was a permissive act given in response to the demands of the members of the Church who were not willing longer to sponsor the divine law of Marriage against the opposition of its enemies; but we hold that such act of President Woodruff's and its approval by the Church had no effect on the validity of a law of the Priesthood, nor did it release any person from the necessity of living the law in order to receive the blessings predicated thereon.

Since President Wilford Woodruff's historic announcement on September 25, 1890, suspending the practice of plural marriage by the Latter-day Saint Church, there have been numerous efforts to discredit his action. Present-day dissenters from the Church who advocate continued divine sanction for the practice of such marriages do so on the assumption that the Church is subordinate to a special "high priesthood" organization which was not affected by President Woodruff's

1Although the views presented in this chapter are specifically derived from the literature of the "Musser" group of "Fundamentalists," the writer has found no deviation from this viewpoint among other dissenters from the Latter-day Saint Church which advocate the practice of plural marriage today.

2Truth, August, 1939, p. 65.
announcement.¹ The reasoning on this subject proceeds on the assertion that Joseph Smith, as President of the "high priesthood," received the law of plural marriage, "... embraced it and passed it on to his associates..." in the priesthood, "... years before the Church knew anything about it."² It is argued that the principle of plural marriage,

... is a law of the Priesthood (D&C 132:28, 58, 61) and NOT a law of the Church. It was revealed strictly as a Priesthood function. For over twenty years after it was revealed to the Prophet Joseph Smith, the Church knew nothing of it. When the Church received the principle in August, 1852, it then became a law to the Church, and when the Church voted for its suspension in 1890, it no longer had a right to function in the principle. ... President Woodruff's action combined with the vote of the people, had the effect of discontinuing the practice of plural marriage as a CHURCH RITE, but it in no sense affected the living of the principle under the authority of the Priesthood. ...³

The "Fundamentalists" emphasize the permanence of the institution of plural marriage as a law of the priesthood by citing four alleged revelations which are interpreted as definite proof that there would be no divinely directed suspension of the law of plural marriage.⁴ The first of these revelations is one attributed to Wilford Woodruff at Sunset, Arizona, in 1830—the essential part of which is as follows:

The devil is ruling over his kingdom and my spirit has no place in the hearts of the rulers of this nation, and the devil stirs them up to defy my power and to make war upon my Saints.

¹The question of the "high priesthood" is considered in Chapters II-IV.


³Truth, October, 1939, p. 114.

⁴Consult Chapters V-VII for a consideration of this subject.
Therefore let mine Apostles and mine Elders who are faithful, obey my commandments which are already written for their profit and guidance.

... woe unto that nation or house or people who seek to hinder my people from obeying the Patriarchal law of Abraham, which leadeth to Celestial Glory, which has been revealed unto my Saints through the mouth of my servant Joseph, for whosoever doeth these things shall be damned, saith the Lord of Hosts, and shall be broken up and wasted away from under heaven by the judgments which I have sent forth, and which shall not return unto me void.1

The second purported revelation was directed to John Taylor in October, 1882, in which the Lord is quoted as emphasizing the importance of plural marriage as a law of the priesthood:

... for My Priesthood, whom I have called and whom I have sustained and honored, shall honor Me and obey My laws, and the laws of My Holy Priesthood, or they shall not be considered worthy to hold My Priesthood, saith the Lord.

... for if my Priesthood, whom I have chosen and called, and endowed with the spirit and gifts of their several callings, and with the powers thereof, do not acknowledge me I will not acknowledge them, saith the Lord, for I will be honored and obeyed by my priesthood.

And, then, I call upon My Priesthood and upon all of my people ... to seek with all humility to fulfill my law, as my priesthood. ...2

A further purported revelation to John Taylor on September 26-7, 1886, is regarded as the best evidence that the practice of plural marriage would continue:

... I the Lord do not change and my word and my covenants and my law do not.

And as I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph: All those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law. And have I not commanded men that if they were Abraham's seed and would enter into my glory, they must do the works of Abraham? I have not revoked this law, nor will I, for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof. ...4

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1The Four Hidden Revelations, pp. 3, 6.
2Ibid., pp. 13-16. 3Consult supra, pp. 101.
4The Four Hidden Revelations, pp. 17-18.
The last of the four purported revelations cited in this regard is one given to Wilford Woodruff in November, 1889, less than a year before he issued the Manifesto:

Let not my servants who are called to the Presidency of my Church deny my word or my law, which concerns the salvation of the children of men. . . . Place not yourselves in jeopardy to your enemies by promise. Your enemies seek your destruction and the destruction of my people. If the Saints will hearken unto my voice, and the counsel of my servants, the wicked shall not prevail.

Let my servants who officiate as your counselors before the courts make their pleadings as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit, without any further pledges from the Priesthood.

I cannot deny my Word, neither in blessings nor judgments. Therefore let mine anointed gird up their loins, watch and be sober, and keep my commandments. . . .

According to the statement of a leading "Fundamentalist"—Lorin Woolley,²—the action of President Woodruff in discontinuing the practice of plural marriage was foreseen and condemned by John Taylor in 1886, when he, as President of the "high priesthood," authorized five men to perpetuate plural marriages independent of the Church. It is further reasoned that although President Woodruff, at the time of the issuance of the Manifesto was the senior in ordination and presided over the "high priesthood," yet he received "... no authority ... from Jesus Christ to ... cancel John Taylor's action."³

... For while he issued a Manifesto stopping plural marriage within the Church—doing so as President of the Church—yet, in his Priesthood capacity, he appointed men and set them apart ... to perform such marriages, an act clearly within the functions of Priesthood and above the jurisdiction of the Church....³

¹Ibid., pp. 29-30.
³A Priesthood Issue, p. 25.
It is alleged that although the principle of plural marriage was regarded as an eternal law—necessary for the highest exaltation, the leaders of the Church, by 1890, felt that it would be necessary to appease those dissenters in and out of the Church who clamored for its abandonment. Consequently, the Church leaders acted on the following policy:

1. That the Manifesto should be issued, so worded as to bind the Church (insofar as its members wished it bound), within the jurisdiction of the territories under government control.
2. The action should bind the Church only, leaving the Priesthood to act independent of it to "carry on" particularly outside of the jurisdiction of the United States.
3. With the abandonment of polygamy by the Church, statehood could be obtained, thus insuring self-government to the people.
4. With statehood, the Mormons, being in the great majority, could pass legislation favorable to the resumption of plural marriage by those wishing to live the higher law.

The first three of these provisions, continues the "Fundamentalist" view, were accomplished, but before the fourth could be effected, the way was closed up and the doctrine which Brigham Young had stated would "... ride triumphantly above all the prejudice and priestcraft of the day ..." was sacrificed, leaving the Church in a state of apostasy.

This situation, it is claimed, was brought about partly because President Wilford Woodruff

... was not alert and active at the time of the signing of the Manifesto. He was in his 84th year of age, was weak both physically and mentally. He leaned largely on his first counselor, George Q. Cannon, who was frequently referred to at the time as 'the brains of the Church.' It was due to the efforts of George Q. Cannon more than any other man within the higher quorums that the Manifesto was framed and signed.

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3Ibid. 4Truth, January, 1939, p. 146.
President Cannon was in turn, however, allegedly influenced by his son, Frank, who, at the time, was Utah's representative to Congress. It was during his efforts to defeat the Cullom bill that Frank

... made promises that led to the issuance of the Manifesto. His thought was to adopt the Manifesto as demanded by certain leaders in Congress, including the President—at the dictation of—local politicians—obtain statehood, and then through local legislative enactments legalize plural marriage. In the interim arrangements would be made to perform such marriages in Mexico and other countries outside of the jurisdiction of the United States. ... 1

According to the "Fundamentalists," the Manifesto was first prepared by a Church committee comprising Frank J. Cannon, Charles W. Penrose, and John White. It was then

... submitted to a committee of non-Mormon officials who were most energetic in prosecuting members of the Church for polygamy, consisting in the main of Judge C. S. Zane, Judge O. W. Powers and Federal Prosecutor C. S. Varian. My impressions are that Prosecutor William H. Dickson was a member of this committee. These men insisted on making certain changes in the draft. The changes were made, the document was re-written by a Mr. Green, Clerk of the Federal court, and from there was taken to Wilford Woodruff and received his signature. ... 2

Prior to its official announcement, it is asserted that the propriety of issuing the Manifesto was considered at a special council of the church leaders at which "... there was not a unanimous mind." 3 Some of those present urged "... strict adherence to the revelation of the Lord dated November 24, 1839," 4 and were consequently not in favor of the document. However, the faction "led by George Q. Cannon"

1Ibid., p. 147.
3Truth, January, 1939, p. 147.
4Consult, supra, p. 162.
prevailed, which advocated that the Manifesto be issued as an appen-
diment to the Gentiles until such time as the law of plural marriage
could be legalized under the sanction of statehood.¹

From the time of its announcement the Manifesto became the
subject of contention. To some of the Saints it was merely

... an act of expediency, a document ... to 'beat the
Devil at his own game.' It was a political document intended to
appease the anti-Mormons until such time as statehood could be
procured, when the Saints, being in the great majority in Utah,
could legislate constitutionally in accordance with right and
justice. ...²

To those, however, who were not living in harmony with the law
of plural marriage, or who had become weary of persecution ". . . the
Manifesto was a direct revelation from heaven, and must be obeyed at
all hazards. . . ."³ During the presidencies of Wilford Woodruff,
Lorenzo Snow, and Joseph F. Smith, the first position was held to,
and means were provided for the perpetuation of the principle; but,
since Heber J. Grant became president of the Church, ". . . the latter
position . . . obtained ascendancy. . . .⁴

After the Manifesto had been accepted by the Church, continues
the "Fundamentalist" argument, President Woodruff, in testifying before
the Master in Chancery for the return of the Church property, broadened
the interpretation thereof to include cohabiting with plural wives,

¹Truth, January, 1939, p. 147. On this point it is maintained
that "Joseph F. Smith, President Woodruff's second counselor, is said
to have refused to sign the document but voted to sustain the Presi-
dent's action on the theory that when put before the Saints for their
approval, as he expressed it—'they would vote the damn thing down.'"
(Ibid.).

²Truth, January, 1941, p. 179.

³Ibid. ⁴Ibid.
and he also extended the scope of the document to prohibit plural marriages in the entire world. The effect of this "... caused resentful feelings among many of the Saints. Bitter complaints reached the ears of the leaders. A spirit of rebellion against the leadership of the presidency was in the offing." Whereupon, President Woodruff "... attempted to meet the situation and appease the Saints" by giving "the inference that the Manifesto had been given as a revelation from God." To the Saints congregated in conference at Brigham City and Logan shortly afterward, he made the statement that the Lord had showed him by vision and revelation what the consequences would have been had the Manifesto not been issued. He remarked that the Lord had told him to ask the Saints which would be better, to sacrifice the work for the dead, and have the leaders cast into prison, or to suspend the practice of plural marriage. The "Fundamentalists" contend that all that President Woodruff said in the speeches at Brigham City and Logan were "... simply an evasion of facts, to satisfy men not in harmony with his action. ... Something had to be said to satisfy these men and to justify the leaders." The speeches of President Woodruff at Logan and Brigham City, it is alleged, merely serve to emphasize the fact that, ...

... men are sometimes driven to an expediency, as they view it, in which full facts are withheld and real situations camouflaged. This was such an occasion. Had the real purpose of the Manifesto been publicly divulged, it would have reawakened the savage bitterness previously exhibited by the enemy, and to admit

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1 Consult, infra, pp. 194-98 for a detailed account of these proceedings.

2 Truth, January, 1937, p. 129.

3 Ibid. 4 Truth, January, 1941, p. 182.
an action that forced men to surrender their religious rights
and compelled many to forsake their wives was man inspired,
would work havoc in the camp of the Saints. An atmosphere of
divine direction must be given the act. . . .

The "Fundamentalists" further assert that although certain
facts may have been revealed to President Woodruff in 1890, pertin-
ing to the practice of plural marriage, ". . . the real purport of
such a message . . . was not confided to the Saints, nor was he told
to sign the Manifesto or have the practice of plural marriage
stopped. . . ." As concluding evidence for their argument against
the Manifesto, the following points are emphasized:

A. The revelation upon which it is supposed to have been
based has not been produced:

If President Woodruff received the revelation (Manifesto)
there must be a record of it. It must be borne in mind that
this alleged revelation countered four previous revelations, (not
including Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants), of which
there is a definite record. A revelation of such far-reaching
import must be within the jurisdiction of the Church and can be
produced; in all fairness to the Saints it should be produced.3

B. It is inconceivable that the Lord would dictate a state-
ment to His Prophet ". . . that required the appointment of a committee

1Ibid., October, 1939, p. 109.

2Ibid. Reference is also made at this point, to a statement
of President Woodruff: "'Joseph Smith continued visiting myself and
others up to a certain time, and then IT STOPPED.' It is our view that
these visits stopped at the signing of the Manifesto, which signing
had the effect of nullifying laws that Joseph and others gave their lives
to establish." (Ibid., pp. 109-10. It should be noted that this event
is spoken of by Wilford Woodruff on October 10, 1880, as having already
occurred. See Journal of Discourses, XXI, 317-18.)

3Truth, September, 1939, p. 87. " . . . Certainly the principle
. . . came to Joseph by direct revelation from heaven. Show us a di-
rect revelation from heaven discontinuing the principle. The Lord
himself told John Taylor that He could not revoke the law. Now, if
the Lord could not revoke the law, by what power did Wilford Woodruff
attempt to do it?" (Truth, January, 1941, p. 181.)
to render it intelligible and fit for publication."¹

C. The Manifesto "... is addressed 'To Whom It May Concern.' There is no 'Thus saith the Lord' nor any other indication in the Declaration that even remotely suggests a revelation from the Lord. ... ."²

D. "... It will be noted that President Woodruff's counselors did not join with him in signing the document, which fact in itself is significant, as all Church epistles had heretofore been signed by the full Presidency. ... .³

E. The language of the Manifesto is too "mild" to be a revelation from God.⁴

In consequence of issuing the Manifesto, conclude the "Fundamentalists," President Woodruff "... lost the keys of the priesthood,"⁵ and since that time the President of the Church has not held the office of President of the High Priesthood.⁶ As a result of accepting the Manifesto, the Church surrendered "a principle of salvation" in order "to obtain statehood in a government marked by the Lord for destruction, ... ."⁷ and fell into a state of apostasy.

... no revelation has come from heaven to the Church since the issuance of the Manifesto in 1890, when the Church pledged allegiance to the Powers of Darkness, covenanting with the nation not to thereafter teach an irrevocable and unchangeable law,

¹Truth, January, 1937, p. 129.
³Ibid. ⁴Ibid., p. 2.
⁵Truth, June, 1940, p. 21.
⁶A Priesthood Issue, p. 4.
necessary to the salvation of man. The last revelation given to the Church was through Wilford Woodruff, in November, 1889, when the Lord commanded the Saints to continue on, make no pledges or promises to the enemy, and not to attempt to revoke that Holy Law of the Priesthood.¹

¹Ibid., January 1, 1936, p. 99.
CHAPTER IX

THE WOODRUFF MANIFESTO--THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW

Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise.

... And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.1

"The contemplative mind may well tremble as, from the verge of a new year, it seeks to read and forecast the events of the near future; but there is always this assurance that all things will work together for good to them that love the Lord."2 Such was the outlook for the year 1890 as the Latter-day Saints awaited the next round in a crusade that saw the anti-Mormon population of the United States arrayed against the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in an effort to stamp out the practice of plural marriage. And although, as indicated by the stringent anti-polygamy legislation enacted during the three previous decades, the United States was determined to eradicate the doctrine of plural marriage, the Church was equally as determined to maintain it. By the latter 1880's the consensus among the crusaders had resolved itself to this: that the Mormon Church must

1"Official Declaration," Doctrine and Covenants, p. 257.

2Deseret News Weekly, January 11, 1890, p. 90.

170
formally renounce "both the doctrine and practice"\(^1\) of polygamy or face extinction. On the other hand, the faithful Saints--particularly those who had entered the practice of plural marriage--felt that inasmuch as the law had been divinely instituted, it should be obeyed at all costs and that the Lord would defend them in their hour of trial. They felt that if the law were to be altered in any way "that process must be operated by the same power"\(^2\) that instituted it. In the meantime, they would "not be shaken of purpose, neither . . . abandon their religious principles in whole or in part, under any kind of pressure whatever. They would hold to their integrity in the full expectation of, sooner or later, beholding the salvation of God."\(^3\)

An incident in 1889 provides evidence that the leaders of the Church were not set on a course to alter the practice of plural marriage contrary to divine will. L. John Nuttall, the private secretary of President Woodruff, records that during a naturalization case which had come before the Third District Court at Salt Lake City in November, 1889, questions arose pertaining to certain procedures in the Latter-day Saint temple ceremony. The problem was discussed at a subsequent meeting in which John W. Young and the Church attorneys met with Presidents George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith of the First Presidency to consider the propriety of entering testimony in court on the subject. Mr. Young suggested that since the practice and open avowal of plural marriage had greatly subsided, that this would also be

\(^1\)Consult, supra, pp. 136.
\(^2\)Consult, supra, p. 132.
\(^3\)"A Phantasmal Anticipation," Deseret News Weekly, April 1, 1885, p. 167.
... a proper time to state in Court that instructions have
been given by the Presidency that no more plural marriages shall
be solemnized &c. Pres. Cannon was not in favor of such action
and said that Pres. Woodruff was the only one to decide that.
Bro. Young suggested that to have time to see Pres. Woodruff the
attorneys should ask to have the case continued till Monday morn-
ing - this was approved & it was proposed that Bro. Young see
Pres. Woodruff tomorrow.¹

On the following evening, Nuttall records a visit with the
President at the Gardo House:

... I found Pres. Woodruff there. He with Pres. Geo. Q.
Cannon had met this afternoon with Bro. John W. Young, Legrand
Young, Jas. H. Moyle and R. W. Young to consider the matters as
presented & talked upon yesterday, and the question was left with
Pres. Woodruff to decide. The President told me of this & said
that he had made the subject a matter of prayer and by the voice
of the spirit he was directed to write, after he had concluded
writing, which he was doing when I arrived, he asked me to copy
a Revelation which he had received - I did so. Having heard Bro.
J. W. Young's reasoning, I felt very much worked up in my feelings
for I did not feel that as a Church we could assume the position
in regard to Celestial Marriage which he seemed to desire should
be taken, and when Pres. Woodruff commenced talking to me this
evening I felt that he had become converted and actually trembled,
for I knew such had not been Prest Woodruff's feelings before,
but as I wrote at his dictation I felt better all the time and
when completed I felt as light and joyous as it is possible to
feel for I was satisfied that Pres. Woodruff had received the
Word of the Lord. ...²


²Ibid., Sunday, November 24, 1889. The revelation recorded on
this occasion by Mr. Nuttall is produced here in full. For its sig-
nificance in "Fundamentalist" claims, consult supra, p. 162.
"Revelation of Pres. Woodruff, Sunday, Nov. 24, 1889.
"Thus Saith the Lord, to my Servant Wilford, I the Lord have
heard thy prayers and thy request, and will answer thee by the voice
of my Spirit. Thus Saith the Lord, unto my Servants the Presidency of my
Church, who hold the Keys of the Kingdom of God on the earth. I the
Lord hold the destiny of the Courts in your midst, and the destiny of
the Nation and all other nations of the earth in mine own hands; all
that I have revealed, and promised and decreed concerning the genera-
tion in which you live shall come to pass, and no power shall stay my
hand. Let not my Servants who are called to the Presidency of my
church deny my word or my law which concerns the Salvation of the chil-
dren of Men. Let them pray for the Holy Spirit, which shall be given
them to guide them in their acts. Place not yourselves in jeopardy to
your enemies by promise; your enemies seek your destruction and the
Although there was no change in the law of plural marriage at this time, the opposition against the Latter-day Saints had reached a point where one could safely predict that something would soon have to give way. The situation was such, observed the Deseret News, that it seemed as though "... the floodgates of the nether regions had been thrown wide open to let loose the foul tide of calumny and the fierce forces of the Evil One." In the hope of gaining some relief, a day of fasting and prayer was held on December 23, 1889, upon which the destruction of my people. If the Saints will hearken unto my voice, and the counsel of my Servants the wicked shall not prevail. Let my servants, who officiate as your Counselors before the Courts, make their pleading as they are moved upon by the Holy Spirit, without any further pledges from the Priesthood, and they shall be justified. I the Lord will hold the Courts, with the officers of Government, and the nation responsible for their acts toward the inhabitants of Zion. I Jesus Christ the Savior of the World am in your midst. I am your advocate with the Father. Fear not little flock, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the Kingdom. Fear not the wicked and ungodly. Search the Scriptures for they are they which testify of me; also those revelations which I have given to my Servant Joseph, and to all my servants since the world began, which are recorded in the records of divine truth. Those revelations contain the judgments of God, which are to be poured out upon all nations under the heavens, which include great babylon. These judgments are at the door, they will be fulfilled as God lives. Leave judgment with me, it is mine saith the Lord. Watch the signs of the times, and they will show the fulfillment of the words of the Lord. Let my servants call upon the Lord in mighty prayer, retain the Holy Ghost as your constant companion, and act as you are moved upon by that Spirit, and all will be well with you. The wicked are fast ripening in iniquity, and they will be cut off by the judgments of God. Great events await you and this generation and are nigh at your doors. Awake, O Israel, and have faith in God, and His promises, and He will not forsake you. I the Lord will deliver my Saints from the dominion of the wicked in mine own due time and way. I cannot deny my word, neither in blessing nor judgments. Therefore let mine anointed gird up their loins, watch and be sober, and keep my commandments. Pray always and faint not, exercise faith in the Lord and in the promises of God; be valiant in the testimony of Jesus Christ. The eyes of the Lord and the Heavenly Hosts are watching over you and your acts. Therefore be faithful until I come. I come quickly, to reward every man according to the deeds done in the body, even so, Amen." (Ibid., November 24, 1889, pp. 106-107.)

Saints were advised to supplicate the Lord ". . . that the enemies of Zion may be confounded in their wicked works and designs, and that the hearts of the rulers and people of this nation may be softened." Although there was no immediate, visible result, it was generally felt that the Lord ". . . had not forgotten Zion, neither would He neglect her in her hour of peril." This assurance was reiterated many times during the ensuing months. Speaking to a congregation in the Salt Lake Tabernacle on February 23, 1890, George Q. Cannon said:

... If this work had depended upon us; if it had been the duty of the Latter-day Saints to provide for it and to take care of it, to control it and manage its affairs, it would have been an utter failure. This is a great consolation to me at least, and certainly it is to all of you. In the midst of trials, and the difficulties that we have to contend with, and the afflictions we have to bear, the testimony constantly is that this is God's work, that He is caring for it, that it does not depend upon us to manage it with our shortsighted wisdom; but that He, with His supreme wisdom and with His Almighty power, and with His eternal providence, is caring for all its interests, is watching over every detail, and is controlling all the labors of His people, the counsels and instructions of His servants, and even the acts of the wicked themselves, for the accomplishment of His purposes and the fulfilling of His great designs. This is a constant consolation which God gives unto His people. And how comforting and sustaining it is! What comfort it has brought to many, yea, to all hearts, in times that are past, as it will do to all hearts in times to come.3

On March 8, 1890, Cannon again found occasion to reassure the Saints that the Lord was cognizant of the trials through which they were passing. He pointed out that "if any of us tremble it is because


2Deseret News Weekly, January 4, 1890, p. 46.

3Ibid., March 15, 1890, pp. 37ff. His confidence in the favorable outcome of the conflict was further amplified by this statement: ". . . every boy and every girl belonging to the Church ought to be filled with joy and thanksgiving that they are so young. If any are to be envied at all it is the rising generation among the Latter-day Saints." (Ibid.)
of lack of faith. There is no Latter-day Saint who is living his
religion and who has the testimony of Jesus, who is seriously dis-
turbed by anything that occurs. He trusts implicitly in God, and
awaits the outcome with confidence." He continued:

... There has never been a time when we have been left with-
out the Word of God. The light from our Father and the revelations
of Jesus have been with the authorities of the Church, and are
with them today. If any of you have any doubts, go to the Lord
and ask in humility, and you will receive a testimony that the
Church is led by the revelations of God. ...

There may be things done, and may be counsel given, that the
Saints cannot understand. It is your duty not to be disobedient.
Go to the Lord, and He will teach you to be obedient to His
counsel. ...

The great strength of this work is because no three men, or no
fifteen men, lead the people. The First Presidency and Apostles
are the leaders of the people, but they do not lead them. God
leads them. Let the Presidency or Apostles turn aside, and they
will fall as did Sidney Rigdon, William Law and others. The
Saints know the voice of the true Shepherd, and will not follow
another.¹

The speaker further noted that if counsel came from the First
Presidency, "... and we do not understand it, it is our duty to go
to our Father and ask Him to enlighten our minds. We have no business
to stand and murmur. ..."¹ The propriety of this counsel is realized
more fully from events a few months later, when President Woodruff
issued his declaration discontinuing the practice of plural marriage.

The first suggestion that such a change was forthcoming is ob-
served from the record of the President of the Church under the date
of September 24, 1890: "I signed 25 recommends. I received 19 letters.
I signed 23 school certificates--I met with three of the twelve
apostles and my counselors upon an important subject."² That the

¹Deseret News Weekly, March 8, 1890, p. 362.
²"Journal of Wilford Woodruff" as cited in Roberts,
Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 220.
"important subject" mentioned here was the issuance of a statement that would discontinue the practice of plural marriage by the Latter-day Saints is substantiated from the account of one of the three Apostles who were present:

September 24, . . . I went to Salt Lake and met in council with President Woodruff, George Q. Cannon, Joseph F. Smith, F. D. Richards, and Moses Thatcher, where President Woodruff had an article read he had prepared for the press of the country declaring to the world that we did not celebrate plural marriages now in the Church and that he counseled the members of the Church not to break the law in relation to plural marriage. The article was approved by all the brethren present, including myself, which seems the only way to retain the possession of our Temples and continue the ordinance work for the living and dead, which was considered more important than continuing the practice of plural marriages for the present. . . .

The declaration announcing the suspension of the practice of plural marriage was issued the following day—September 25, 1890. On that day President Woodruff noted:

September 25: I have arrived at a point in the history of my life as the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where I am under the necessity of acting for the temporal salvation of the church. The United States government has taken a stand and passed laws to destroy the Latter-day Saints on the subject of polygamy, or patriarchal order of marriage; and after praying to the Lord and feeling inspired, I have issued the following proclamation which is sustained by my counselors and the twelve apostles.

The complete text of the proclamation, which has come to be known as the Manifesto of 1890, is as follows:

OFFICIAL DECLARATION

To Whom It may Concern:

Press dispatches having been sent for political purposes, from Salt Lake City, which have been widely published, to the effect that the Utah Commission, in their recent report to the Secretary


2Cited in Roberts, loc. cit.
of the Interior, allege that plural marriages are still being solemnized and that forty or more such marriages have been contracted in Utah since last June or during the past year, also that in public discourses the leaders of the Church have taught, encouraged and urged the continuance of the practice of polygamy—

I, therefore, as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby, in the most solemn manner, declare that these charges are false. We are not teaching polygamy or plural marriage, nor permitting any person to enter into its practice, and I deny that either forty or any other number of plural marriages have during that period been solemnized in our Temples or in any other place in the Territory.

One case has been reported, in which the parties allege that the marriage was performed in the Endowment House, in Salt Lake City, in the Spring of 1889, but I have not been able to learn who performed the ceremony; whatever was done in this matter was without my knowledge. In consequence of this alleged occurrence the Endowment House was, by my instructions, taken down without delay.

Inasmuch as laws have been enacted by Congress forbidding plural marriages, which laws have been pronounced constitutional by the court of last resort, I hereby declare my intention to submit to those laws, and to use my influence with the members of the Church over which I preside to have them do likewise.

There is nothing in my teachings to the Church or in those of my associates, during the time specified, which can be reasonably construed to inculcate or encourage polygamy; and when any Elder of the Church has used language which appeared to convey any such teaching, he has been promptly reproved. And I now publicly declare that my advice to the Latter-day Saints is to refrain from contracting any marriage forbidden by the law of the land.

WILFORD WOODRUFF
President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

If the anti-polygamy legislation of the 1880's had presented a severe test for some of the saints, the Manifesto of 1890 was equally as trying for others. The institution of plural marriage had been defended with such zeal that for many, a change was unthinkable. They felt that divine sanction of plural marriage was secure and that the hardships they were called upon to endure were merely part of the test by which the Almighty would refine them in preparation for exaltation in His kingdom. As the crusade became more intense some felt that

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1Doctrne and Covenants, pp. 256-57.
the outcome would be miraculously resolved in favor of the Saints; and a few went so far as to anticipate the Second Coming of the Savior. There is little wonder, then, that President Woodruff's declaration engendered a feeling of unrest, for it was not the powerful display of divine intervention that some had expected. One observer expressed the Saints' reaction to the Manifesto in these words: "... many of our people cannot understand why, and are upset about it, and it has created a great discussion, and fear in the hearts of many L.D.S. people..." This sentiment permeated the October semi-annual conference of the Church which convened on October 4, 1890, in the Tabernacle at Salt Lake City. Quoting an eye-witness: "It was a great Conference and the Tension ran high because of the action of the government and the issuing of the Manifesto by Prest. Woodruff [sic]." During the session on Sunday, October 5, it was noted that . . . the attendance was increased to such an extent that both the Assembly Hall and Tabernacle and on the grounds the people occupied every available space standing in the Halls and doorways. All were anxious to hear the First Presidency speak. It was a great Day in Israel and for the church especially, and a terrible responsibility on the part of the United States... George Q. Cannon's speech, on that day, is clear indication of the fact that he was speaking to many whose preconceived ideas of the outcome of the polygamy controversy left no place for the suspension of the practice of plural marriage.

. . . We do not walk in the dark. We do not rely upon that which men tell us. I thank God this morning, as I do all the time, that He has not left His servants without a witness. All

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2Ibid., p. 241. 3Ibid.
who have joined this Church and been sincere in their espousal of the truth have a living testimony in their hearts concerning all that the Elders say to them and all the counsel that is given. It is this that constitutes the great strength of the work of God. Every faithful member of the Church is a witness to the truth of the work. If it were not for this, we should be a very weak people and could easily be broken up. It is not the President of the Church, or his Counselors; it is not the Twelve Apostles; it is not the Presidents of Stakes, nor any other officer in the Church, upon whom the people depend, or unto whom they look solely for the word of God and the testimony of Jesus. They have the privilege given unto them by the Lord to know for themselves concerning all these matters, and there is no counsel given by the Presidency of the Church, no step taken, nor no policy pursued that they have to depend upon their personal influence to have the people believe, because the people can go to God themselves, if they have doubts upon any point, and call upon Him, in the name of Jesus, to reveal to them whether that which is done or taught is from Him or not. They need not be in doubt. They need not run around asking questions about matters which may appear mysterious to them; but they can go to the Lord in their secret places, and He will remove their doubts and answer their questions, and He will throw light upon their minds respecting the matters about which they may be disturbed.

There have been many things in this Church which have come in contact with the traditions and the pre-conceived ideas of men. There are many things today which, perhaps, come in contact with views which we have entertained. There is scarcely any thinking man or woman in the Church who has not indulged in views and ideas concerning the future of this work—the manner in which it would go forth, etc., and some of these views have been rudely opposed by events. We have been shown that God's ways are not our ways, and that our thoughts are not God's thoughts. We have been made to see that He is the author of this work, and that He will conduct it to suit His purposes, and not the purposes of man. I have no doubt that all of us who have had any experience in the Church have seen this. We have seen many of our anticipations disappointed in the manner in which the work has gone forth. It has required the Spirit of God poured out upon us to reconcile us to many things, perhaps, that have been taught and done in this Church from the beginning. But this is our refuge, this is our tower of strength, that we can go unto the Lord, without the mediumship or intercession of man, and in secret we can ask Him for, and obtain from Him, the light, the intelligence and the knowledge necessary to enable us to pursue our course as Latter-day Saints. Think of how many doctrines have been taught that have been new to the world, but that God has revealed in our day! How could we understand them unless the Spirit of God bore the testimony to them? Who on the earth believed them? They were not sanctioned by tradition. They were not upheld by the common belief of man. They were new to this generation. Yet, though they shocked the prejudices of mankind, and perhaps startled us as Latter-day Saints, when we sought God for a testimony concerning
then, He never failed to give unto us His Holy Spirit, which witnessed unto our spirits that they were from God, and not of men. So it will be to the end. The Presidency of the Church have to walk just as you walk. They have to take steps just as you take steps. They have to depend upon the revelations of God as they come to them. They cannot see the end from the beginning, as the Lord does. They have their faith tested as you have your faith tested. So with the Twelve Apostles. All that we can do is to seek the mind and will of God, and when that comes to us, though it may come in contact with every feeling that we have previously entertained, we have no option but to take the step that God points out, and to trust to Him, as we were often told by President Young, for the results. That is the way this Church is led. There is no being, save the Lord himself, who knows the end from the beginning. Who of us would be tested if we were in that condition? It is just as necessary that the Presidency and the Apostles should be tried as it is that you should be tried. It is as necessary that our faith should be called into exercise as that your faith should be called into exercise. We can see a certain distance in the light of the Spirit of God as it reveals to us His mind and His will, and we can take these steps with perfect security, knowing that they are the right steps to be taken. But as to what the result will be, that is for the God of Israel to control. This is the way in which the Church of God has always been led, and it will always be led in that way until He comes who is our King, our Lawgiver and our President, even Jesus Christ.¹

Interest continued during the following day,² October 6, the high point of which was the reading of the Manifesto to the Conference. Whereupon, Lorenzo Snow, President of the Quorum of Twelve, arose and made the following motion:

I move that, recognizing Wilford Woodruff as the president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and the only man on the earth at the present time who holds the keys of the sealing ordinances, we consider him fully authorized by virtue of his position, to issue the Manifesto which has been read in our hearing, and which is dated September 24th, 1890, and that as a church, in general conference assembled, we accept his declaration

¹Deseret News Weekly, November 8, 1890, pp. 648ff.

²John Whitaker observed that "... interest still continued and there was no room for hundreds of saints who stood outside ... During the sessions each of the Leading brethren tried to bring about harmony, and develop a spirit of willing obedience to what the First Presidency had done. ..." Whitaker, op. cit., p. 241.
concerning plural marriages as authoritative and binding.\(^1\)

It was noted that President Snow's proposal "... was carried by a weak vote, but seemingly unanimous..."\(^2\) Following this, George Q. Cannon again spoke. He commenced by quoting the 49th verse of section 124 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

> Verily, verily, I say unto you, that when I give a command-ment to any of the sons of men, to do a work unto my name, and those sons of men go with all their might, and with all they have, to perform that work, and cease not their diligence, and their enemies come upon them, and hinder them from performing that work; behold, it behoveth me to require that work no more at the hands of those sons of men, but to accept of their offerings.

> ... It is on this basis that President Woodruff has felt himself justified in issuing this manifesto.

After reviewing the course taken by the Church in defense of the law of plural marriage, he further remarked:

I suppose there are two classes here today in this congrega-tion—one class who feel to sorrow to the bottom of their hearts because of the necessity of this action that we have now taken; another class who will say: 'Did I not tell you so?' 'Did I not tell you it would come to this?' 'Did I not say to you that you ought to take advantage of and comply with this years ago, instead of enduring that which you have suffered since that time?' There may be men here today who pride themselves on their foresight, and who take credit to themselves because they foresaw, as they allege, that which we have done today, and would lead others to believe that if their counsel had been adopted, if the views that they presented had been accepted by the people, it might have saved very serious consequences to us all and left us in a better position than that which we occupy today. But I, for one differ entirely with this view. I believe that it was necessary that we should witness unto God, the Eternal Father, unto the heavens and unto the earth, that this was really a principle dear to us—dearer, it might be said, in some respects, than life itself. We could not have done this had we submitted at the time that those

\(^1\) *Doctrine and Covenants*, p. 257.

\(^2\) Merrill, *op. cit.*, p. 128. Another witness observed that ". . . practically every hand went up in a great approval. But there was great sadness and sorrow in the hearts of many. . . ." Whitaker, *loc. cit.*
of whom I speak suggested submission. . . .

Latter-day Saints, there has been nothing lost in the five years that have just passed. . . . We can look God in the face . . . we can look the holy angels in the face; we can look mankind in the face, . . . without feeling that we have done anything unworthy of . . . the faith that God has given unto us. This all of us can do; and if no other result has followed what may be called our obstinacy, then these which I now describe, they are grand enough to pay us for all that we have gone through.

But the time has come when, in the providence of God, it seemed necessary that something should be done to meet the requirements of the country, to meet the demands that have been made upon us, and to save the people. President Woodruff and others of us have been appealed to many scores of times to get out something and to announce something. Some of our leading brethren have said: 'Inasmuch as we have ceased to give permission for plural marriages to be solemnized, why cannot we have the benefit of that? Why cannot we tell the world it, so as to have the benefit of it? Our enemies are alleging constantly that we still practise this in secret, and that we are dishonest and guilty of evasion. Now, if we have really put a stop to granting permissions to men to take more wives than one, why should not the world know it and we have the advantage of it?' These remarks have been made to us repeatedly. But at no time has the Spirit seemed to indicate that this should be done. We have waited for the Lord to move in the matter; and on the 24th of September, President Woodruff made up his mind that he would write something, and he had the spirit of it. He had prayed about it and had besought God repeatedly to show him what to do. At that time the Spirit came upon him, and the document that has been read in your hearing was the result. I know that it was right, much as it has gone against the grain with me in many respects, because many of you know the contest we have had upon this point. But when God speaks, and when God makes known His mind and will, I hope that I and all Latter-day Saints will bow in submission to it. When that document was prepared it was submitted. But, as is said in this notion that has been made, President Woodruff is the only man upon the earth who holds the keys of the sealing power. These Apostles all around me have all the same authority that he has. We are all ordained with the same ordination. We all have had the same keys and the same powers bestowed upon us. But there is an order in the Church of God, and that order is that there is only one man at a time on the earth who holds the keys of sealing, and that man is the President of the Church, now Wilford Woodruff. Therefore, he signed that document himself. Some have wondered and said, 'Why didn't his Counselors sign? Why didn't others sign?' Well, I give you the reason—because he is the only man on the earth that has this right, and he exercised it, and he did this with the approval of all of us to whom the matter was submitted, after he had made up his mind, and we sustained it; for we had made it a subject of prayer also, that God would direct us.1

1Deseret News Weekly, October 18, 1900, pp. 550-553.
In continuing his remarks, President Cannon stated that the issuance of the Manifesto had been undertaken with a full realization of the responsibility that rested upon him and his brethren as leaders of the Church. He then concluded:

... Will it try many of the Saints? Perhaps it will; and perhaps it will try those who have not obeyed this law as much as any others in the Church. But, all that we can say to you is that which we repeatedly say to you—go unto God yourselves, if you are tried over this and cannot see its purpose; go to your secret chambers and ask God and plead with Him in the name of Jesus, to give you a testimony as He has given it to us, and I promise you that you will not come away empty, nor dissatisfied; you will have a testimony, and light will be poured out upon you, and you will see things that perhaps you cannot see and understand at the present time.

Before I sit down I wish to call attention to one remarkable thing, and it may be an evidence to you that the devil is not pleased with what we have done. It is seldom I have seen so many lies, and such flagrant outrageous lies told about the Latter-day Saints as I have quite recently... It seems as though the devil is mad every way. 'Now,' says he, 'they are going to take advantage of this, and I am determined they shall have no benefit of it; I will fill the earth with lies concerning them, and neutralize this declaration of President Woodruff's.'

... To me it is pretty good evidence that the devil is not pleased with what we are doing. When we kept silence concerning this, then we were very mean and bad people; and now that we have broken the silence and made public our position, why, we are wicked in other directions, and no credence can be attached to anything that we say. You may know by this that his satanic majesty is not pleased with our action. ...

Following George Q. Cannon, President Wilford Woodruff addressed the assembly. He stated that the step he had taken in issuing the Manifesto had not been done without earnest prayer before the Lord. He added:

... I am about to go into the spirit world, like other men of my age. I expect to meet the face of my Heavenly Father—the Father of my spirit; I expect to meet the face of Joseph Smith, of Brigham Young, or John Taylor, and of the Apostles, and for

1Ibid.
me to have taken a stand in anything which is not pleasing in
the sight of God, or before the heavens, I would rather have gone
out and been shot. . . .

He continued by saying that the Lord had given commandments
concerning many things ". . . and we have carried them out as far as
we could; but when we cannot do it, we are justified. The Lord does
not require at our hands things that we cannot do." He closed his re-
marks with this assurance:

. . . the Lord will never permit me nor any other man who
stands as the President of this Church, to lead you astray. It
is not in the programme. It is not in the mind of God. If I
were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place,
and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children
of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty. . . .

Following the conference, some still failed to see the pro-
priety of President Woodruff's action:

. . . I heard some say they were not prepared to sustain his
action, and that they have great reasons for not doing so. And
so a great crisis has come, and it will mean that great changes
in social, economic and business relations and in family ties
and responsibilities is sure to follow. I feel sorry for some
of the brethren who have so strong convictions, it will be a great
trial to many. And we all pray for wisdom and strength and
courage to go forward with the action of the church and leave the
consequences in the hands of the Father of us all. . . . So far
as I am concerned I will follow the majority of the Authorities
of the church in all their actions.2

Another of the saints, writing to one of his plural wives at
this time, expressed concern that she was no doubt ", . . worrying
considerably over the thoughts of what I may do since the manifesto of
Pres. Woodruff and the action of the Conference. . . ." He continued:

. . . It is evident now that if a person is convicted of viola-
ting the law he will be punished to the full extent and regarded
as not only breaking the law of the land, but disregarding the
action of the Church; and though considerable sympathy for him may
be felt, it will not be prudent to make any outward display of

1Tbid. 2Whitaker, op. cit., pp. 241-42.
the same.¹

He concluded by assuring his plural wife that he had not forgotten the solemn covenants they had made and advised her to be patient, praying that the Lord would "... hasten the day when these barriers shall be broken that are now erected between us. ..."¹

Not all of those who were concerned over the issuance of the Manifesto regarded it as the will of the Lord: "... some can't understand why this the Manifesto should be, it looking as tho we feared what man could do instead of trusting in the Power of God to enable them to carry out all his commandments. He being able to bring us off more than conqueror [sic]. ..."² For these, the Manifesto was obviously not the spectacular display of divine power that they had anticipated. This feeling was no doubt intensified by a rumor which prevailed during the latter part of 1890 to the effect that the Second Coming of Christ was nigh at hand.³ The fallacy of such an expectation was stressed on October 5th, during the general conference when George Q. Cannon dwelt at some length upon the subject. Among other things, he said:


²"Diary of Charles Walker," (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Library, 1945-46), October 12, 1890, II, 927.

³This was no doubt a corollary of too much speculation on the statement of Joseph Smith found in the 130th section of the Doctrine and Covenants: "I was once praying very earnestly to know the time of the coming of the Son of Man, when I heard a voice repeat the following: "Joseph, my son, if thou livest until thou art eighty-five years old, thou shalt see the face of the Son of Man..."" (vss. 14-15: note also verse 16.) The fact that 85 years corresponded to the year 1890, was apparently reason for some to correlate the Second Coming with the issuance of the Manifesto or shortly thereafter.
Before I sit down there is one subject that I have felt I wanted to speak about. I think it of some importance to us as Latter-day Saints. It was referred to yesterday by two or three brethren. It is in relation to the events of 1891, and connected with the coming of the Lord. It was intimated by Brother Roberts that some people thought that such an event might perhaps happen, and he was anxious that the Saints should not be disappointed if nothing did occur during that year that would fulfill expectations, because a great many anticipations have been indulged in connected with that year, and I believe there has been altogether too much agitation upon this subject. . . .

The speaker then proceeded to show that the revealed knowledge on the subject rendered impossible the establishment of a definite date for the return of the Lord. He closed his remarks by saying:

... Do not look for some great cataclysm to occur, which will show all the world that this is the Kingdom of God. Perhaps such a thing will occur; but I will tell you what I have observed during my life—that God works in natural ways. His purposes come around seemingly perfectly natural—so natural that the world cannot see the hand of God in them. It requires faith and the Spirit of God to show these things.

I remember my thoughts and ideas when in my boyhood. Being familiar with the revelation which God had given concerning the Civil War, I thought to myself, now when that occurs this nation will be convinced that Joseph is a prophet, because the revelation was so plain. It stated where the war should commence and other particulars concerning it, and at the time the whole nation was congratulating itself upon its peace, and the probability of war was entertained by no one. The idea that there would be a war was ridiculed. How wonderfully that revelation was fulfilled! But how many persons have been converted by the strict fulfillment of that prophecy? I do not know of one. My conclusion is that God works in this way among the children of men, and they will continue to harden their hearts against all the evidences of the divinity of this work, notwithstanding the continued fulfillment of the prophecies of the Elders of this Church. The inhabitants of the earth are not converted by the fulfillment of the prophecies, because they come along so naturally. Here we have cyclones, and all these things that are evidences of the last days, and who trouble themselves about it? Why they tell us that it is by means of the telegraph and the facility with which news travels that we learn more of these things. They always were and always will be, they say, and this is no evidence that these are the last days; for when was there a time when there were no wars, or accidents, or when we did not have whirlwinds, and tempests, and earthquakes? This is the way in which the Elders are met when they speak about

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1Deseret News Weekly, November 8, 1890, pp. 651-52.
these things. Therefore, Latter-day Saints, let us put our trust in God and, waiting the fulfilment of His promises, look forward with the eye of faith to their fulfilment that we may rejoice in them when they are fulfilled. Amen.¹

Commensurate with the feeling of apprehension with which some members of the Church viewed the Manifesto, there arose a clamor among non-Mormons that President Woodruff's announcement was "unauthoritative" and "indefinite" and that it had been issued merely as a sop to pacify the "gentiles." This topic became a subject for rebuttal by the Deseret News. To the assertion that the Manifesto was indefinite and unauthoritative, the paper replied:

... It is definite enough for any person that can read. And he who on reading it declares that it is 'simply the advice of President Woodruff as a man,' proclaims his own inability to understand ordinary words, or his utter disregard of honor and truth. The language of the declaration is 'I, therefore, as President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.' It is in his official position as President of the Church, the one man who can speak with authority to and for the Church on such a matter as this. ... ²

In answer to the claim that the Manifesto was merely an effort on the part of the Church to quiet the opposition, the News stated:

Some of the most impertinent and unprincipled of the haters of the 'Mormons' may flatter themselves that the action of President Woodruff, in announcing certain facts and giving counsel on a very important matter, was taken to meet their demands and quiet their outrages. If so they are very much mistaken. And their continued noise and dissatisfaction prove the point we have here advanced. What they have pretended to want affords them no content. It does not appease their wrath. It does not still their tongues. It does not decrease their venom.

The declaration of President Woodruff was published because he wished to make known his position on the matter that he explained, the course he had pursued, his firm intention, and his

¹Ibid.
²Ibid., October 11, 1890, pp. 513-14.
counsel to the Church over which he presides. It was not done with a view to placate the agitators or quiet the disturbers. It was done because he considered it right and timely.¹

For the Latter-day Saints, the best evidence that the Manifesto was not a fraud came from the repeated assertions of the Church leaders that the truthfulness thereof did not depend upon blind obedience. As George Q. Cannon advised prior to its issuance: If counsel comes from the First Presidency "... and we do not understand it, it is our duty to go to our Father and ask Him to enlighten our minds. We have no business to stand and murmur. ..."² It is doubtful that this admonition, which was oft repeated during the months following the Manifesto, would have been so earnestly implored had the Manifesto been given in ill-faith or insincerity as some contended.

Speaking to those gathered at the Manti conference on February 15, 1891, George Cannon stated:

We have, it is true, our tribulations, and they are different from those we had in former times. Once our persecutions came in the form of mobbings and drivings, hunger and nakedness, and these things tried the faith of many; of some so sorely that they turned away from the truth, they fell into darkness, and left the Church which they once delighted in.

Our recent trials have been in the shape of imprisonments of our brethren, and confiscations of our property; and these things are hard to bear; but if there is any apostasy, and I suppose there must be some, on this account, it is good to know that it has not been extensive.

I am aware that there is a disposition on the part of a few, to make comparisons between things past and things present, to the disadvantage of things present; and to conclude that the Church is gone astray, that it has been allowed to drift without the guidance of the power of God.

The Manifesto has been a stumbling block to some, and other

¹Ibid., pp. 514-15.
²Supra, p. 175.
things have tried the faith of the Latter-day Saints in varying degrees, but I think they should not.

I am rather pleased that we should have these things to contend with, because I realize that they are necessary in order that we may gain strength to stand, not alone, but by our faith in the Lord and with His help.

He seems determined to teach us to rely on Him and not on our own strength, nor on the strength and wisdom of man.

If there ever was a time when the Saints stood in need of an individual, personal testimony of the truth of the Gospel which they have embraced, it surely is now, and they must have it or there is no security for them.

Every individual has a right to a personal knowledge of the truth, and of the mind and will of God concerning his own personal affairs. Our Father does not ask you to walk in darkness, nor by another's light, but it is His good pleasure to give each one of you the light of His Holy Spirit in your own souls.

By this light you have a right to examine all things, that you may hold fast to that which is good. It is your privilege to know for yourselves, not only if Joseph Smith was a true prophet, but whether Wilford Woodruff is God's own choice of a leader in His Church, if the Twelve Apostles are approved of Him, and all things whatsoever which concern you to know.

I would not give much for a Latter-day Saint who does not know these things, because the want of this knowledge proves that individual slothful and lax; but they who have it are awake and active, ready at all times to put a shoulder to the wheel and aid in rolling forth the great work of the last dispensation; and herein lies the strength of the latter-day work.1

Two weeks later, President Cannon addressed the conference of the Salt Lake Stake, admonishing the Saints along this same line:

... We have heard this afternoon concerning the officers of this church having authority, and how the people should listen to them. This is all very well in its place. But does any man who occupies this stand [the stand of the First Presidency] have the right to teach the people doctrines and they be required to receive them, independent of their own investigation and examination? Certainly not. The great characteristic of this Gospel is that every human being who embraces it has the right to know for himself concerning its divinity... The constant appeal that is given to the members of this Church is, 'You enquire for yourselves. You go to the Lord, the Fountain of all knowledge, and learn for yourselves concerning the truth of these things.'... This is the secret to the tenacity with which the Latter-day Saints cling to their faith. In the midst of imprisonment, in the midst of mobbings, when life has been apparently at stake,

and when it has seemed as though to save life it would be necessary to deny the principles that they believed in—in that dread hour they have stood firm and have faced the consequences without flinching, because they knew for themselves that this was of God. They had obtained a testimony from Him in answer to their prayers. They had obeyed the form of doctrine that He had revealed, and the blessings that had been promised had followed their obedience. Therefore, no trial or affliction has been able to move the latter-day Saints or to disturb them in their faith. . . .

A feeling of apprehension toward the Manifesto was still evident at the general conference of the Church held in April, 1891. At the session of the conference held on Saturday, April 4, Abraham H. Cannon spoke, observing, among other things, that "... some people have predicted that the destruction of the Church is near..." He continued:

... A greater error could not be made... Those who assert that the Church is going to decay, point, as an evidence in that direction, to what they conceive to be the mistakes of the authorities. What they hold to be mistakes are, however, only what was proper should be done under existing conditions at the time the steps were taken. The same class of pessimists regarded the act of Adam and Eve in partaking of the forbidden fruit as a calamity to humanity, when it was a part of the divine plan whereby man could be brought to a knowledge of good and evil, and gain an experience that would advance him in the scale of being. A certain class of the contemporaries of Moses condemned the leading of the Israelites out of bondage into the wilderness as a mistake. But the glorious results of the exodus is a manifestation of divine wisdom. The lowly character of the birth of Christ has been regarded by some as a mistake, as it would, in their estimation, have been better for Him to have come into the world under affluent circumstances, so that he might have been received by the rich and the noble. It was deemed a mistake for him to be nailed upon the cross, and even His disciples imagined when it occurred that their calling was gone. Yet that glorious act of sacrifice constituted the atonement of a God for the redemption of humanity. It is the judgment of men not illuminated by the Holy Ghost which commits mistakes. Men's thoughts are not as God's. The men who have led this Church in this dispensation do not make mistakes, although, viewed by individuals devoid of the Holy Spirit, some of their acts may assume that appearance. I testify that President Woodruff who stands at the head of the

1Ibid., March 14, 1891, pp. 372-73.
Church is directed by the revelations of God. So with those associated with him. They may make mistakes in their personal concerns but the affairs of the Church of Christ are moved forward by the power of inspiration of the Almighty. The Church will not diminish in power but will increase in every gift and grace and in the power of salvation from this time forward.¹

Two days later, during the same conference, George Q. Cannon again admonished each member of the Church to gain an individual assurance that the course being followed was true:

There is one thought that has weighed very much upon my mind during our Conference, and probably it is because of the peculiar circumstances and the changed conditions which surround us. It is the supreme importance of members of this Church living in close communion with God—the necessity for a living testimony in the breasts of everyone of us, that each may know for himself or herself that the course which is being pursued is in accordance with the mind and will of God.

If the officers of this Church were dependent upon the people, upon their sustenance, upon their confidence, and the people themselves did not know by any means except that which human wisdom would impart or human judgment justify, that they were taking the right course, we would be in a most unfortunate position, because constant changes are occurring. I need hardly refer to that which took place at our last Conference in order to bring this home to the minds of all. I allude now to the manifesto.

If the Lord were not with this Church, if he were not directing His servants, and the people themselves did not have the testimony of Jesus concerning this work, the issuance of that manifesto would have had a fatal effect upon thousands, perhaps, in the Church. I can say for myself that I never shrunk from anything in my life as I did from that. I know it was God who dictated it—that it was issued in accordance with the requirements of the Spirit of God; and I also know that every member of this Church who is living in close communion with the Lord has had a testimony—notwithstanding their natural feelings with reference thereto, notwithstanding the painful consequences which followed its adoption in relation to existing family relations—that it was the right thing to do. The outpouring of the Spirit which has been bestowed upon us since we assembled, are all evidences to my mind that the Lord has borne a testimony to the Latter-day Saints concerning these matters.

The speaker also dwelt upon that corollary of the Manifesto that had proved trying to many—namely, the status of existing plural

¹Ibid., April 11, 1891, pp. 499-500.
family relations:  

... It is a serious question—one that comes to us constantly. It is one that I hope will be answered by the action of the Government. When it becomes convinced of our sincerity in issuing this manifesto declaring that plural marriages should cease, let us hope that some favorable action will be taken in regard to existing relations.

I am not certain yet that we shall be disappointed in this. I believe we have already seen, in effect, a great softening of feeling upon these points, and the people must understand—they should understand—that what we do shall be done in good faith; that we do not create a feeling that will be a continuation of the antipathy manifested through this doctrine. . . .

He also referred to another argument of some dissatisfied members of the Church who felt that if the leaders of the Church had remained as faithful as Daniel when confronted by the occupants of the lion's den, or, as faithful as the three Hebrew children when placed in the fiery furnace, that perhaps the Lord would likewise have sustained them through the flames of the polygamy crusade and preserved the practice of plural marriage:

... A person looking at this superficially might think there was something in the spirit of it. I have no earthly doubt that if President Woodruff had been required to go into the lion's den or into the fiery furnace, or to do anything else in the way of sacrificing his life in order to save this people, he would have done it. I have not a shadow of doubt that President Taylor would have done the same. All of us knew his courage and firmness. I will not speak of myself, but I do not believe there is one of these men holding the apostleship who would not gladly, had it been God's will and the sacrifice would have sufficed, have given up his life to save this people. The three Hebrew children in taking the course they did involved only their own lives; their action did not involve the lives, liberties, and future of a great people. Therefore you can see that the analogy between their case and ours is not a complete one.

When Daniel went into the lions' den he himself was the sufferer; it was his own life only that was jeopardized. But suppose just for a second that the leaders of this people had said, 'We will stand and resist this; we will carry out this command of God in

1The feelings of one member upon this subject are reflected in the letter of James Chandler to his plural wife. Consult, infra, P. 204.
the face of the whole world? What would have been the effect?
Why, it would have involved this entire people, every member of
this Church, every man and child in it. And how many are there
who would have obeyed that doctrine and shown their faith? How
many would perhaps have said, 'You have no right to drag us into
this—to involve us and our lives and our future, and everything
that we have on earth in a sacrifice which only you yourselves
are concerned in.' Can you not see the difference between the
three cases I have quoted? It is as plain as it can be.

President Cannon concluded his remarks by again urging each
Latter-day Saint to obtain for himself a testimony of the authenticity
of the Manifesto:

... Each one of us should have the light of the Spirit of
God shining in his heart so that he may know for himself that
which is right, that when we hear the voice of the true Shepherd
we will recognize it. We may not be able to tell all the details,
but we will know by the testimony of the Spirit of God within us
that which is right. This is the testimony which it gives to
the Latter-day Saints. They know when they hear the voice of a
servant of God, and they understand it. They may not be able to
explain all of the reasons connected with this, but they have a
living testimony of the truth within them.

Go and plead with the Lord; ask Him to remove the darkness from
your minds, to give you the light of the Holy Spirit, that it may
shine upon your understanding, that you may comprehend it, and
you will not wait upon Him in vain. I can assure you that He will
hear your prayers and answer them; He will fill you with peace
and joy, and you will know for yourselves that this is God's work;
you will know that all your wisdom, the wisdom of men, of those
standing at your head, is not alone sufficient to guide this
Church. We may mark out paths for traveling, but the Lord directs
our ways, and we cannot walk safely without. We may have our ideas
as to how this work is going to be built up and established, but
the Lord will show us... that 'As the heavens are higher than
the earth, so are God's ways higher than man's ways.' We would
never have reached these valleys had not the Lord guided us; and
we can look back and see how wonderfully His promises have been
fulfilled... .

In October, 1891, an event occurred which added clarification
to many of the questions that had arisen regarding the Manifesto. It
will be remembered that under provision of the Edmunds-Tucker Act of
1887, the property of the Church in excess of $50,000—not used

1Deseret News Weekly, April 11, 1891, pp. 506-508.
exclusively for purposes of worship—had escheated to the United States Government. Since no provision existed for the disposal of the property, it was decided that a master in chancery be appointed to ascertain a charitable use therefore. In 1891 the Supreme Court of the Territory of Utah appointed Charles F. Loofbourow to this position; whereupon, the Church authorities applied to him for the return of the property to the Church. This action subsequently brought the leaders of the Church to the witness stand where they were interrogated concerning their intentions in the recent abandonment of the practice of plural marriage. During these hearings, which commenced on October 19, many questions were asked concerning the scope and interpretation of the Manifesto.

Upon being cross-examined by Charles S. Varian, President Woodruff was asked if he intended by the Manifesto that a tenet or principle of the Church was changed in any degree. He replied, "No, sir, I do not know that I did. . . . I will remark that a principle may be believed in by the Church—a true principle—and still not be practiced." When asked if the Manifesto included obedience to the laws proscribing "unlawful cohabitation" as well as the contracting of plural marriages, the President replied, "I intended the proclamation to cover the whole ground—to obey the laws of the land entirely."

Another question arose concerning the motivation behind the Manifesto:

Q—Do you believe that the Almighty has revealed to the Church, through you, that the practice should be discontinued, and abandoned?

1See Ibid., October 24, 1891, pp. 577-83 for the entire proceedings.
A-- I do.

Mr. Varian-- If that is the case, why didn't you declare it to your Church as a revelation, and not by way of your personal advice and counsel?

A-- Well, men differ with regard to the principle of revelation. Of course my view is that inspiration is revelation; it is from the same source. A man is not always required to say 'Thus saith the Lord' in counsel or advice which he gives on certain matters.

Q-- Did you indicate, or intend to indicate, in any way to your congregation that what you said in this behalf, in this particular, was a revelation changing the divine law, as it had stood with you for years?

A-- As I before said, what I intended was to give counsel stopping the practice of the patriarchal order of marriage in the Church. As many words may not have been used, perhaps, in this matter as some might suppose should have been, but what I said to the people of our Church I said by inspiration, as I view it--by the mind and will of the Lord. I intended to give them to understand that we should stop the practice of plural marriage.1

In reply to a question by Mr. Varian on the scope of the Manifesto, President Woodruff asserted: "The Manifesto was intended to apply to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints everywhere in every nation and country. We are giving no liberty to enter into polygamous relations anywhere."2

On the following day--October 20th--George Q. Cannon of the First Presidency was called to the witness stand. When asked if he understood that the principle of plural marriage as decreed in the Doctrine and Covenants "... is no longer a true principle as a tenet of the faith of the Church," he replied:

... I believe I know, as far as a human being can know, from a divine source, that that revelation is from God; but circumstances have arisen of such a character as to compel us to no longer obey it.

Q-- To suspend its operation.

A-- Not to suspend, but to cease its practice.

Q-- To suspend the operation of what is still a divine principle?

A-- Yes, the truth is unchangeable.

Q-- Then you do not understand that God has changed that principle?

A-- Not in the least.2

1Ibid. 2Ibid.
President Cannon was then asked if he regarded as divinely inspired, the action of President Woodruff in discontinuing the practice of plural marriage; to which he remarked:

Circumstances have been such surrounding us for so many years, that I could not, of course, help seeing in the position I occupied—having had to pass through pretty severe ordeals on this question—that unless there was some wonderful interposition of Providence, the force of public opinion, becoming intensified as the years roll by, would eventually compel us either to cease its practice, or we would be crushed. That seemed to me an inevitable consequence. I hoped for years that there would be some such interposition of God—that the nation would give us credit for our sincerity, and that it would see in this practice that we were animated by the sincerest and best of motives. I believe God inspired President Woodruff to say unto us that we had gone far enough.

Q—This manifesto is the advice of President Woodruff personally?
A—Yes, sir.

Q—It is not a command, is it?
A—President Woodruff is a very modest man. It would have been a command if some men had issued it, and it was a command in his case. He was fully persuaded that the Church at large, like himself, received a testimony that this manifesto was issued by inspiration from God.¹

Joseph F. Smith, the second counselor to President Woodruff, was the next to testify. When encountered with the question, "Do you believe that President Woodruff was inspired by Almighty God to issue it the Manifesto?"; he replied with an emphatic, "Yes, I do." The questioning continued:

Q—Do you believe it would be pleasing or displeasing in the sight of God for any member of the Church to enter into polygamous or plural marriage?
A—Well, I do not know that I am prepared to say; but I believe it would be entirely contrary to the rules of the Church for any man to do so.

Q—What would be the penalty for such violation?
A—Well, I think any person doing such a thing would be called in question as to his fellowship and be liable to be excommunicated from the Church. . . .¹

He was then asked if he had any expectation or hope that the

¹Ibid.
practice of plural marriage would be re-established among the Latter-day Saints: "Well, from my present knowledge I do not see how it could be possible. I think that so long as the circumstances continue to exist which have brought about these results it would be impossible and inconsistent to suppose any such thing could be." Asked if he thought the Manifesto applied "... to the cohabitation of men and women in plural marriage where it already exists," President Smith answered, "... I do not see how it can be otherwise."

That afternoon, Lorenzo Snow, President of the Twelve Apostles, was also questioned. One query put to him was this: "Does not future conformity with this Manifesto depend upon whether the Lord should speak again upon the subject; that is to say if the Lord should speak again through President Woodruff, setting aside this Manifesto, the obligation would not exist that exists now to conform to it?" He answered:

The Lord gave Joseph Smith revelations in regard to plural marriage; and so He has the right to restore that practice if He thinks proper. But it might be a thousand years, and it might never be.
Mr. Varian-- And it might be a month.
Apostle Snow-- And it might be ten hours; but I do not believe for a moment that the practice will ever be restored until the Lord comes Himself and then I do not know that it will be. That is His own business.¹

The significance of the testimony of the Church leaders before the Master in Chancery lies in the reaffirmation and clarification of the following points:

A. The Manifesto was regarded as a divine injunction that the Lord had accepted the sacrifice of the Latter-day Saints and from

¹Ibid.
thence forth the practice of plural marriage was forbidden.

B. The Manifesto was regarded as binding only upon the practice and not upon the belief of plural marriage as a principle of truth.

C. Although not specifically set forth therein, the Manifesto applied to polygamous living as well as the contracting of new plural marriages.¹

D. It was not expected that the practice of plural marriage would soon be again restored, although it was within the prerogative of the Lord to do as He pleased in the matter.

E. The Manifesto was regarded as having universal application, extending to the Saints in all parts of the world.

F. It was felt that anyone who violated the provisions of the Manifesto would be liable to excommunication from the Church.

That the surrender of the practice of plural marriage came in compliance to divine decree, rather than from a policy of appeasement, is further evident from a statement by Charles S. Varian—one of the most active participants in the campaign against plural marriage—during the escheated property cases:

They the Latter-day Saints are not obeying the law of the

¹On this point, B. H. Roberts notes: "It could not be otherwise. Once counseling submission to the laws of the land on the question of contracting plural marriages, inexorable logic would demand that it be extended also to polygamous living—unlawful cohabitation—equally a subject of congressional legislation; and said laws had been declared to be equally constitutional with those forbidding plural marriages, and therefore the church president could not say obedience should be given to one part of the law and not to the other." (Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 225.)

²Consult, Roberts, Ibid., VI, 224-26.
land at all, but the counsel of the head of the church. The law of the land, with all its mighty power, and all the terrible pressure it was enabled to bring with its iron heel upon this people, crushing them to powder, was unable to bring about what this man did in an hour in the assembled conference of this people. They were willing to go to prison; I doubt not some of them were willing to go to the gallows, to the tomb of the martyr, before they would have yielded one single iota.  

The feeling of apprehension that followed in the wake of the Manifesto was even more pronounced following the proceedings before the Master in Chancery. One observer noted that the testimony of President Woodruff in court, "... caused an uneasy feeling among the People and some think he has gone back on the Revelation on Plural Marriage and its covenants and obligations. ..." He continued:

... Some faint-hearted Men who have entered into Plural Marriage have taken advantage of these sayings in the Lawyers court and have put away their Plural wives that were given them of the Lord and have deserted them to shift for themselves, taking Pres. Woodruff's statement as a good excuse for so doing. But the majority of the People say, 'Let us stand still and see the Salvation of God.' And yet some are wavering, and seem to doubt the Power of God [to] overrule all things for the onward progress of His glorious work and that He stands at the Helm and will do things according to his own will and his own time and in his own Manner. For it is His Kingdom set up in the Last Days no more to be thrown down nor given to another People [sic].

On October 25th and 26th, 1891, five days after the proceedings before the Master in Chancery, Presidents Woodruff and Cannon of the First Presidency spoke at the Box Elder Stake Conference at Brigham City, Utah; and a week later, on November 1, they addressed a similar gathering in Logan. On both occasions the reaction of the Saints to the Manifesto and the proceedings before the Master in Chancery was a subject of concern. The crux of President Woodruff's message at Logan

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1Deseret News Weekly, October 31, 1891, as quoted in Ibid., VI, 229.

was as follows:

... The Lord has told me by revelation that there are many members of the Church throughout Zion who are sorely tried in their hearts because of that manifesto, and also because of the testimony of the Presidency of this Church and the Apostles before the Master in Chancery. Since I received that revelation I have heard of many who are tried in these things, though I had not heard of any before that, particularly. Now, the Lord has commanded me to do one thing, and I fulfilled that commandment at the conference at Brigham City last Sunday, and I will do the same here today. The Lord has told me to ask the Latter-day Saints a question, and He also told me that if they would listen to what I said to them and answer the question put to them, by the spirit and power of God, they would all answer alike, and they would all believe alike with regard to this matter. The question is this: Which is the wisest course for the Latter-day Saints to pursue—to continue to attempt to practice plural marriage, with the laws of the nation against it and the opposition of sixty millions of people, and at the cost of the confiscation and loss of all the Temples, and the stopping of all the ordinances therein, both for the living and the dead, and the imprisonment of the First Presidency and Twelve and the heads of families in the Church, and the confiscation of personal property of the people (all of which of themselves would stop the practice), or after doing and suffering what we have through our adherence to this principle to cease the practice and submit to the law, and through doing so leave the Prophets, Apostles and fathers at home, so that they can instruct the people and attend to the duties of the Church, and also leave the Temples in the hands of the Saints, so that they can attend to the ordinances of the Gospel, both for the living and the dead?

The Lord showed me by vision and revelation exactly what would take place if we did not stop this practice. If we had not stopped it, you would have had no use for Brother Merrill, for Brother Edlefsen, for Brother Roskelley, for Brother Leishman, or for any of the men in this temple at Logan; for all ordinances would be stopped throughout the land of Zion. Confusion would reign throughout Israel, and many men would be made prisoners. This trouble would have come upon the whole Church, and we should have been compelled to stop the practice. Now, the question is, whether it should be stopped in this manner, or in the way the Lord has manifested to us, and leave our Prophets and Apostles and fathers free men, and the temples in the hands of the people, so that the dead may be redeemed. A large number has already been delivered from the prison house in the spirit world by this people, and shall the work go on or stop? This is the question I lay before the Latter-day Saints. You have to judge for yourselves. I want you to answer it for yourselves. I shall not answer it; but I say to you that that is exactly the condition we as a people would have been in had we not taken the course we have.

I know there are a good many men, and probably some leading men, in this Church who have been tried and felt as though President Woodruff had lost the Spirit of God and was about to apostatize.
Now, I want you to understand that he has not lost the Spirit, nor is he about to apostatize. The Lord is with him, and with this people. He has told me exactly what to do, and what the result would be if we did not do it. I have been called upon by friends outside of the Church and urged to take some steps with regard to this matter. They knew the course which the Government were determined to take. This feeling has also been manifested more or less by members of the Church. I saw exactly what would come to pass if there was not something done. I have had this spirit upon me for a long time. But I want to say this: I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write. I laid it before my brethren--such strong men as Brother George Q. Cannon, Brother Joseph F. Smith, and the Twelve Apostles. I might as well undertake to turn an army with banners out of its course as to turn them out of a course that they considered to be right. These men agreed with me, and ten thousand Latter-day Saints also agreed with me. Why? Because they were moved upon by the Spirit of God and by the revelations of Jesus Christ to do it.\(^1\)

President Woodruff concluded his remarks with this assurance:

\[...\text{The Lord is at work with us. He is doing things here that you do not comprehend. Make these matters a subject of prayer. Do not worry; do not feel bad about them. ...}\]

\[...\text{I want the Latter-day Saints to stop murmuring and complaining at the providence of God. Trust in God. Do your duty. Remember your prayers. Get faith in the Lord, and take hold and build up Zion. All will be right. ...}\]

Speaking at the same conference, George Q. Cannon remarked that the recent action of the Church leaders in issuing the Manifesto and testifying before the Master in Chancery,

\[...\text{sustain with great clearness the necessity of the teachings which have been constantly given to the people of this Church concerning the manner in which they should live—that they should live so as to have a living testimony within themselves regarding the teachings that they receive, the counsel that is given, and}\]

\(^1\text{Deseret News Weekly, November 14, 1891, pp. 658-60. For the proceedings of the Box Elder Stake Conference held on October 27, see Ibid., November 7, 1891, pp. 626-27.}\]
the course that is pursued. From the beginning of the Church in these days we have been under this necessity. The work of our God has not been according to the ideas of men. Everything connected with it, it may be said, has come in contact with preconceived notions. There is scarcely a move that has been made in the Church that has not conflicted with traditionary ideas and the views that men entertained concerning the course that should be pursued. . . .

He then expressed his feelings concerning the Manifesto in these words:

... I heard one of the Twelve say that if he were called upon to testify, he believed he could say truthfully that the Latter-day Saints were more pleased to hear the manifesto than they were to hear the revelation given on celestial marriage. Now, I could not say that, and yet I believe there is a great element of truth in the statement. I believe that it was a very great trial to this Church, and I believe, too, that there are a great many people glad that the manifesto has been given, because they feel relieved in their feelings. And does not this account, in part at least, for the manifesto? If this statement made by this Apostle is true—and I am not prepared to question it—what does it betoken? It betokens that though this has been a doctrine of the Church for nearly fifty years, there is still a large element unprepared to carry it out; at least, they have not obeyed it; and I know (I speak it almost with a feeling of shame) that there have been serious abuses of that doctrine. I believe that both men and women have been guilty of many things that are offensive in the sight of God. I have said that if there were no other reason than this, it would be sufficient, to my mind, for the Lord inspiring His servant to give that manifesto. But there were other reasons for this, and as a people we should be prepared, by the assistance and testimony of the Spirit of God, for these things. I know myself that it was the will of God that that manifesto should be given. I know it was the will of God that the word should go to the Latter-day Saints that plural marriages should cease, and that we should conform to the requirements of the law of the land. Just think of the condition the leaders of Israel were in! Here were probably nineteen-twentieths who had not obeyed that law. They would have been involved with those who had obeyed it. They would have been disfranchised. The Lord revealed that to President Woodruff. They would have been deprived of temples and the ordinances of salvation administered therein, of the society of the Priesthood, and perhaps of their own personal property. Now, the Lord saw the condition that the leaders of the people were in. Can you not see how wise it was in Him to come to our deliverance by giving His word? I have heard President Woodruff say that he would rather go out and be shot than yield

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1Ibid., November 21, 1891, pp. 699-91.
one hairs-breadth of that doctrine unless the Lord should command him, and he waited, and we all waited, until the Lord did give the command, and when He gave it, His Spirit testified to us that it was the right thing to be done.

... We believed that it was right to carry this principle out; and if we had been sentenced to be killed, I suppose some would have felt that it was right for us to submit to that rather than yield the principle. God gave the command and it required the command of God to cause us to change our attitude. President Woodruff holds the same authority that the man did through whom the revelation came to the Church. It required that same authority to say to us, It is enough. God has accepted your sacrifice. He has looked down upon you and seen what you have passed through, and how determined you have been to keep his commandments, and now he says, It is enough. It is the same authority that gave us the principle. It is not the word of man.¹

President Cannon also observed that there were many who felt that they were in danger of losing their exaltation because of the suspension of the practice of plural marriage. He assured them, however, that

... the Lord judges our hearts; He looks at our motives. There were a great many men in past times who never had the privilege of obeying this doctrine, because the law was not given to them. Do you think that they are excluded from exaltation? Do you think that they will be deprived of celestial glory? I do not. Eternity is a long period, and we cannot conceive of its duration. The Nephites, according to all that has come down to us, were monogamists. This law was not given to them, as far as we have any account, yet they were a great and a mighty people be fore the Lord. They had Prophets and mighty men among them.²

Following the remarks of the two members of the First Presidency at the Box Elder Conference, one of those in attendance made this observation: "... This I think will have a good effect on the People and will have a tendency to calm their feelings of disquiet which has troubled many of late since Pres. Woodruff's reply to the Court interrogations. ..."² That such was the case may be seen from a note

¹Ibid.
penned to his plural wife by another member of the Church who attended the conference:

If you have not read the Deseret News of Friday, Oct. 23, I wish you would read it. You will there see the testimonies of Pres. Woodruff, Geo. Q. Cannon, Jos. F. Smith, and Lorenzo Snow before the Master in Chancery... You will there see that their testimony is that they understand the manifesto to be the will of the Lord unto the people requiring them to keep the law in relation to unlawful cohabitation as well as to plural marriages. In addition to this, Pres. Woodruff gave us a revelation last Sunday from the Lord in which he showed that if the people did not comply with the law, they would lose their temples, have to cease performing the sacred ordinances and endure much suffering, imprisonment, &c., besides. If you could have been there and heard him, I have no doubt you would feel, like myself, that it would be wrong to resist longer, or refuse to obey the Lord's command. Pres. Cannon bore testimony and said that every violation of the law brings disrepute upon the Church and reflects upon the sincerity of its members. They counseled us to be kind to our wives and families, provide for them, educate our children, etc., but to conform to the law. I have never felt to dread imprisonment or any suffering I might be called to endure through persecution; but, although it grieves me to write it and I know it is worse than death for you to hear, yet how can we resist the word of the Lord? Go to Him yourself, my dear, seek Him with all your heart and He will give you strength. He has been teaching us apparently by your sufferings in the past as well as by the testimonies of His servants that we must have higher aims and loftier motives than self-gratification and I have no doubt that, if we will only be faithful to each other and to Him, He will more than make up for our seeming loss hereafter... Time may come, as I trust it will when a change shall be brought about and we will not be under such restrictions; an opportunity may present itself to go to Mexico or some other place, but let us be patient and try to feel that our Father knows best... Perhaps you will say there is a change but you will see that the brethren testify to the truth of the principle, that it is eternal in its nature but, that God has required His Saints to suspend the practice because of the suffering of His Saints... [sic]

Although the Manifesto and subsequent events had been cause for great concern, the Latter-day Saints were reminded at the general conference held in April, 1892, that new revelation had always been a trial to the people:

The revelation of plural marriage, no doubt, tried the hearts of a great many people. The Manifesto tried a great many people. But not many have left the Church on account of it. The evidence of the brethren before the Master in Chancery tried some of the people, and politics tries the people; and I tell you that everything that comes along will try some of the people. . . .

The speaker concluded, however, with the assurance that "... we are today a tried and proven people so far that there will not be the apostasy, in proportion to our members, that was witnessed in the beginning of the Church. . . ."

By 1892, the tide of opposition that had threatened to completely engulf the Church two years previously, had abated to such an extent that a special day of thanksgiving was decreed for May 1. The proclamation announcing it, read as follows:

Beloved Brethren and Sisters-- A little over two years ago we were impressed to call upon the Latter-day Saints to set apart a day for fasting and solemn prayer unto the Lord. Our position at that time was such that it seemed as though no earthly power could deliver us from the evil which environed us and which threatened our overthrow. Turn which way we would, every avenue seemed closed against us. Human help was beyond our reach. Our eyes and hearts under those circumstances, turned to the Lord as the only power to which we could appeal for succor. Do we say too much when we testify that the Lord did on that occasion condescend to hear and answer the supplication of His people?

Their humiliation before Him was not without its fruits. If the objects which were suggested in our circular letter at that time to be prayed for be examined, the results will show how wonderfully the Lord has granted the prayers of His people.

In view of this, and the great mercy shown unto us by our Father in heaven in permitting us, at our recent General Conference, to lay the top stone of the Salt Lake Temple with shouts of Hosanna to God and the Lamb, it has suggested itself to us that it would be most appropriate for the Latter-day Saints to gather in their various places of worship, on Sunday the first day of May, 1892, and in fasting and prayer, offer up to the Most High their heart-felt and solemn thanksgivings for His goodness and mercy, which He has shown unto them and the deliverance that He has wrought out in their behalf.

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2Ibid., April 30, 1892, p. 604.
Further evidence of a softening in the attitude of the country toward the Latter-day Saints came in the form of two proclamations of amnesty issued by Presidents of the United States in 1893 and 1894. Although the petition for amnesty signed by Benjamin Harrison on January 4, 1893, was carefully worded to apply to a few Latter-day Saints only who, since November, 1890, had obeyed the law respecting unlawful cohabitation;\(^1\) and although a similar, but scarcely more liberal proclamation was issued by Grover Cleveland on September 25, 1894, both petitions were, nevertheless, indicative of the direction in which Mormon sentiment was moving in the years following the discontinuance of plural marriages.

The dedication of the Salt Lake Temple in April, 1893, after forty years of construction, afforded another occasion to emphasize the propriety of the issuance of the Manifesto. "I feel disposed to say something upon the Manifesto," commenced President Woodruff at the sixth session of the dedicatory services:

... To begin with, I will say that this work was like a mountain upon me. I saw by the inspiration of Almighty God what lay before this people, and I knew that something had to be done to ward off the blow that I saw impending. But I should have let come to pass what God showed me by revelation and vision; I should have lived in the flesh and permitted these things to come to pass; I should have let this temple go into the hands of our enemies; I should have let every temple been confiscated by the hands of the wicked; I should have permitted our personal property to have been confiscated by our enemies; I should have seen these people—prophets and apostles, driven by the hands of their enemies, and our wives and children scattered to the four winds of heaven—I should have seen all this, had not Almighty God commanded me to do what I did. Did any of you ever know Joseph Smith, or Brigham Young, or John Taylor? Did you know of what material they were made? Was there a man on God's footstool that could have moved them to the right or the left from anything that they felt inspired to do? No. Here are George Q. Cannon, Joseph

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\(^1\)Consult, Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, p. 289.
F. Smith, and these Twelve Apostles. I want to ask you if Wilford Woodruff could have done anything that these men would have accept-
ed, in performing the work that was done, that pained the hearts
of all Israel, except by the spirit and power of God? No. I
would just as soon thought of moving the foundations of this world
as to have taken any course to move these men only by the reve-
lations of God. When that Manifesto was given they accepted of it.
Why? Because they had the Spirit of God for themselves; they knew
for themselves it was right. It was passed also before ten-thous-
and Latter-day Saints and there was not a solitary hand lifted
against that edict. They also had the spirit of revelation for
themselves. Now I will tell you what was manifest to me, and what
the Son of God performed in this thing. The Lord has never yet
taken from Lucifer, the Son of the Morning, his agency. He still
holds it, and will hold it until he is bound with the keys of death
and hell. The devil still has power; and the Son of God knew full
well if something was not done in order to check this, all these
things which I have referred to would have come to pass. Yes, I
saw by vision and revelation this temple in the hands of the wicked;
I saw our city in the hands of the wicked; I saw every temple in
these valleys in the hands of the wicked; I saw great destruction
among this people. And these things would have come to pass, as
God Almighty lives, had not that Manifesto been given. Therefore,
the Son of God felt disposed to have that thing presented to the
Church and to the world, for purposes in His own mind. The Lord
had decreed the establishment of Zion. The Lord had decreed the
finishing of this Temple. He had decreed that the salvation of
the living and the dead should be given in these valleys of the
mountains. And God Almighty decreed that the devil should not
have the power to thwart it. If you can understand that, that is
the key to it.¹

"There has been a wonderful change of sentiment in this nation
toward us during the last few years," recorded one of the Saints follow-
ing the dedication of the Salt Lake Temple²—a change that also evoked
comment from several of the speakers during the October conference of
the Church in 1893. George Q. Cannon expressed his amazement at the
change in attitude toward the Latter-day Saints in these words:

It is very interesting to see the favorable condition of affairs
abroad, so far as we are concerned. The wrath of man has been

¹G. Homer Durham (ed.), The Discourses of Wilford Woodruff

²"Journal of Levi M. Savage," (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young Uni-
turned aside from the people of God. Who could have thought a few years ago, when we were surrounded, it might be said, by a feeling of intense enmity and hatred, and a spirit that seemed anxious for our destruction, that such a wonderful change would occur within so short a period in regard to public opinion?

. . . Well, we can praise our God for His mercy and kindness to us, because this is in fulfillment of the promises which He has made. He has told us that when we should pass through the deep waters He would be with us, and He would sustain and deliver us; and we this day, in this conference, can praise and glorify His name with all our hearts for having fulfilled His promises to us. We are living evidence of the truth of that which He has told us.\(^\text{1}\)

The speaker concluded his remarks with the assurance that " . . . everything . . . is encouraging. . . . I say to you there are good days coming. There are bright days in the future for Zion. We are advancing, and I have good to say, I have nothing but encouragement for the people of God. . . .\(^\text{1}\)

Such then, was the official termination of the practice of plural marriage, which had been so tenaciously defended and practiced by the Latter-day Saints. In summarizing the reaction of those whose faith had been tried so severely because of the discontinuance of the patriarchal order of marriage, the conclusion of one observer is characteristic:

I will say that when polygamy was done away it was a great blow to me, not that I expected to ever take more wives, but the thing that bothered me was that the Lord had said to the Prophet Joseph that it should be a standing law and now it was done away.

Could it be that the Lord has made a mistake? This question bothered me for a long time but it came to me all at once, . . . that it is still a standing law and will be so forever, but we are not allowed to practice it for a while.

I can now rest easy about it.\(^\text{2}\)

\(^1\)Deseret News Weekly, October 28, 1893, pp. 577-78. See also the remarks of Lorenzo Snow at the same conference: Ibid., November 4, 1893, p. 609f.

The death throes of the system of plural marriage continued for a few years, and a group of dissenters arose who did not accept the action of President Woodruff; but in general, the Saints accepted it, and as George Q. Cannon concluded "... every member of this Church who is living in close communion with the Lord has had a testimony ... that it was the right thing to do ..."\(^1\)

\(^1\)Supra, p. 191.
CHAPTER X

THE MANIFESTO OF 1890—AN EVALUATION

... It seems as though the devil is mad every way. 'Now,' says he, 'they are going to take advantage of this, [the Manifesto] and I am determined they shall have no benefit of it; I will fill the earth with lies concerning them, and neutralize this declaration of President Woodruff's.'

... You may know by this that his satanic majesty is not pleased with our action. ...

Enough has been said concerning the practice of plural marriage to indicate that to the majority of Latter-day Saints, the Church was neither responsible for the introduction of that principle nor for its suspension. Although many of the Saints were sorely tried in their faith when, in September, 1890, President Wilford Woodruff issued a proclamation discontinuing plural marriages, the majority were soon united in the belief that the action of President Woodruff was the right thing to do. There were a few, however, who refused to accept the Manifesto and regarded it as a sign of weakness and compromise on the part of the Church leaders. This sentiment has persisted to the present day and is currently embodied in the teachings of "Fundamentalists" and their sympathizers who advocate divine sanction for the continued practice of plural marriage since the Manifesto. With a few added embellishments, their position toward the Manifesto is the same as that expressed by the anti-Mormon organ in Salt Lake City shortly

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1George Q. Cannon speaking at the general conference of the Church on October 6, 1890. Consult, supra, P. 183.
after President Woodruff made his historic announcement in 1890: "To the Saints, who are stupid and who believe what their chiefs tell them, this [the Manifesto] passes for a revelation." The "Fundamentalist" position is further characterized by the following points:

A. The practice of plural marriage is an integral part of a special "high priesthood" organization operating independent of the Latter-day Saint Church and as such was not affected by the Manifesto of 1890—the reasoning on this point being that President Woodruff issued the Manifesto in his capacity as President of the Church and not as President of the high Priesthood.2

B. Present-day authorization for the practice of plural marriage was assured, when in 1886, the issuance of the forthcoming Manifesto was foreseen and condemned, and a special dispensation of authority was bestowed upon a select group of individuals to perpetuate the practice independent of the Church.3

C. Because of physical and mental weakness incident to old age, President Woodruff succumbed, in 1890, to a policy of compromise, advocated by George Q. Cannon, by which the Manifesto would be issued as an appeasement to the Gentiles until such time as the law of plural marriage could be legalized under the sanction of statehood.4

D. The Manifesto was first framed by a Church committee comprising Frank J. Cannon, Charles W. Penrose, and John White, after which

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1Salt Lake Tribune, October 8, 1890, p. 4.
2Consult, supra, Chapter II.
3Consult, supra, Chapter V.
4Supra, pp. 163-64.
it was submitted to a group of anti-Mormon officials: Charles S. Zane, O. W. Powers, and Charles S. Varian, who made changes in the draft and then presented it to President Woodruff for his signature.¹

E. After the Manifesto was accepted by the Church, its scope was broadened and extended to include unlawful cohabitation and prohibit plural marriages among Latter-day Saints throughout the entire world. This resulted in a spirit or rebellion which was quelled only by giving the inference that the Manifesto was a revelation from God. This was accomplished at the Box Elder and Cache stake conferences in October and November, 1891, when President Woodruff maintained that the Lord had revealed to him that it was better to sacrifice plural marriage rather than work for the dead.²

As further conclusive evidence that the Manifesto was not a revelation from God, the following points are cited:

a. The revelation upon which it is supposed to have been based has never been produced.

b. It is addressed "To Whom It May Concern," rather than "Thus Saith the Lord," and therefore cannot be regarded as a revelation.

c. The language of the Manifesto is too "mild" to be a revelation from God.

d. Since President Woodruff's counselors didn't sign it, the Manifesto cannot be viewed with the same esteem as other revelations of the Church.³

In order to create an air of divine sanction for present-day

¹Supra, pp. 164.
²Supra, pp. 165-66.
³Supra, pp. 167-68.
polygamous living, "Fundamentalist" spokesmen have spared no effort to establish the truthfulness of the foregoing theses. However, as indicated elsewhere in this study, their position rests upon a strained interpretation of Latter-day Saint Church History. This is nowhere more evident than in their concept of the Manifesto.

The fallacy of urging the present-day practice of plural marriage on the basis of a "high priesthood" organization operating independent of the Church has already been considered; as also the assertion that a special dispensation of authority to continue plural marriages after the Manifesto, was bestowed upon a select group of individuals in 1886.

It has also been pointed out that the leaders of the Church were not committed to a course of compromise on the subject of plural marriage except as dictated from the Lord. As a corollary of this, it is impossible to find any valid support for the contention that due to mental weakness, President Woodruff succumbed to the enticings of a coterie of appeasers led by George Q. Cannon, and issued the Manifesto. This is particularly evident after reviewing the statements of these two men on the subject. Quoting George Q. Cannon:

... We have waited for the Lord to move in the matter; and on the 24th of September, President Woodruff made up his mind. ... He had prayed about it and had besought God repeatedly to show him what to do. At that time the Spirit came upon him, and the document that has been read in your hearing the Manifesto was the result.

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1Supra, Chapter IV. 2Tbid. 3Supra, Chapter VII.

4Supra, pp. 131-32ff.

5Supra, P. 182.
On another occasion he said, "I can say for myself that I never shrunk from anything in my life as I did from that [the Manifesto]. I know it was God who dictated it—that it was issued in accordance with the requirements of the Spirit of God. . . ." And again, "... I hoped for years that there would be some . . . interposition of God—that the nation would give us credit for our sincerity, and that it would see . . . that we were animated by the sincerest . . . motives. I believe God inspired President Woodruff to say unto us that we had gone far enough." The First Counselor also testified as follows:

... I have heard President Woodruff say that he would rather go out and be shot than yield one hairs-breadth of that doctrine unless the Lord should command him, and he waited, and we all waited, until the Lord did give the command, and when He gave it, His Spirit testified to us that it was the right thing to be done. . . . We believed that it was right to carry this principle out; and if we had been sentenced to be killed, I suppose some would have felt that it was right for us to submit to that rather than yield the principle. God gave the command and it required the command of God to cause us to change our attitude. President Woodruff holds the same authority that the man did through whom the revelation came to the Church. It required that same authority to say to us, 'It is enough. . . .'

Equally as conclusive are the statements of Wilford Woodruff on the subject of the authorship of the Manifesto: "I am about to go into the spirit world. . . . I expect to meet the face of my Heavenly Father . . . and for me to have taken a stand in anything which is not pleasing in the sight of God . . . I would rather have gone out and been shot. . . ." He further noted that,

... the Lord will never permit me nor any other man who stands

1Supra, p. 191. 2Supra, p. 196. 3Supra, p. 203. 4Supra, p. 133-34.
as the President of this Church, to lead you astray.

... If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty. ... ¹

On another occasion he affirmed that,

... I should have let all the temples go out of our hands; I should have gone to prison myself, and let every other man go there, had not the God of heaven commanded me to do what I did do; and when the hour came that I was commanded to do that, it was all clear to me. I went before the Lord, and I wrote what the Lord told me to write. I laid it before my brethren—such strong men as Brother George Q. Cannon, Brother Joseph F. Smith, and the Twelve Apostles. I might as well undertake to turn an army with banners out of its course as to turn them out of a course that they considered to be right.²

He later noted:

... I saw by the inspiration of Almighty God what lay before this people. ... But I should have let come to pass what God showed me by revelation and vision ... I should have let every temple been confiscated by the hands of the wicked; I should have permitted our personal property to have been confiscated by our enemies; I should have seen these people—prophets and apostles, driven by the hands of their enemies, and our wives and children scattered to the four winds of heaven—I should have seen all this, had not Almighty God commanded me to do what I did. ... And these things would have come to pass, as God Almighty lives, had not that Manifesto been given. ... ³

Any indication from the foregoing statements, of "mental weakness" on the part of President Woodruff, or that George Q. Cannon was committed to a course of appeasement, must be inferred.

The above quotations also preclude any suggestion that the Manifesto was the brain-child of a Church committee comprising Frank Cannon, Charles W. Penrose and John White; or that it was subjected to

¹ SUPRA, p. 184.
² SUPRA, p. 201.
³ SUPRA, pp. 206-207.
alteration by a group of non-Mormons before being submitted to President Woodruff for his signature, as the "Fundamentalists" claim. If more conclusive evidence is desired, the following exchange between the Senate investigators and George Reynolds during the Smoot investigation in 1904, is important:

Mr. Worthington—You said something about helping to write the manifesto. Will you explain that?
Mr. Reynolds—President Woodruff wrote it in his own hand—and he was a very poor writer, worse I believe, than Horace Greeley—and he gave it into the hands of three of the elders to prepare it for the press. I was one of those three.
Q—Who were the three?
A—Charles W. Penrose, John R. Winder, and myself.
Q—What did you do? You said you helped to write the manifesto;
A—The answer came from the fact of the question coming to me whether I had read it and understood it, and I answered that I had assisted in writing it.
Q—Did you three, then, transcribe these notes of President Woodruff, or did you rewrite it, or what?
A—We transcribed the notes and changed the language slightly to adapt it for publication.
Q—It contained the substance?
A—Yes; it contained the substance.
...............
Chairman— I do not know but I may have misunderstood. I understood this manifesto was inspired.
Mr. Reynolds—Yes.
Q—That is your understanding of it?
A—My understanding was that it was inspired.
Q—And when it was handed to you it was an inspiration as you understand, from on high, was it not?
A—Yes.
Q—What business had you changing it?
A—We did not change the meaning.
Q—You have just stated you changed it.
A—Not the sense, sir; I didn't state we changed the sense.
Q—But you changed the phraseology?
A—We simply put it in shape for publication—corrected possibly the grammar, and wrote it so that—
Q—You mean to say that in an inspired communication from the Almighty the grammar was bad, was it? You corrected the grammar of the Almighty did you?
A—That was not a revelation—'Thus saith the Lord,' It was simply that the inspiration of the Lord came to President Woodruff, and he gave it in his own language. It had nothing to do with correcting what the Lord said.
Q—Then was it inspired?
A—I consider it so. There are various degrees of inspiration,
in some of which the man simply has the ideas and he writes it in his own language. I regard the manifesto as one of those.

Q—After you had revised it, did you submit it to the president of the church?
A—Yes sir; and he accepted it as his.1

Perhaps the best indication that the Manifesto was not submitted to and altered by a group of non-Mormon officials composed of C.S. Zane, O. W. Powers, and C. S. Varian, is the statement of Charles Varian following the testimony of Wilford Woodruff before the Master in Chancery, when he heatedly exclaimed that the Latter-day Saints

...are not obeying the law of the land at all, but the counsel of the head of the church. The law of the land, with all its mighty power, and all the terrible pressure it was enabled to bring with its iron heel upon this people crushing them to powder, was unable to bring about what this man did in an hour in the assembled conference of this people. They were willing to go to prison; I doubt not some of them were willing to go to...the tomb of the martyr, before they would have yielded one single iota.2

It is doubtful that Varian, who did not have a reputation of altruism toward the Mormons, would have been so outspoken on this occasion had he so much as seen the Manifesto prior to its issuance, let alone altered its contents.

In considering the assertion that President Woodruff went beyond his original intention and enlarged the meaning and scope of the Manifesto during his testimony before the Master in Chancery, it should be noted that nothing was said during the court proceedings that had not already been inferred in the Manifesto. True, unlawful cohabitation was not specifically mentioned therein; however, as Roberts points out,


2Supra, p p 198-99.
it was equally a subject of congressional legislation and, like the law proscribing plural marriages, had also been declared constitutional by the Supreme Court of the land. Therefore, it would be inconsistent to think that President Woodruff demanded submission to part of the law and not to the remainder.\footnote{Supra, p} Furthermore, as pertaining to the universality of its application, the Manifesto was directed by President Woodruff to the ". . . Church over which I preside," there being no indication that this did not extend to the Saints everywhere. These facts were merely magnified during the court proceedings.

As a corollary of the testimony in chancery, the "Fundamentalists" assert that a spirit of rebellion ensued and that President Woodruff attempted to meet the situation by giving the inference ". . . that the Manifesto was a revelation from God."\footnote{Supra, p} They further maintain that the statements of President Woodruff at the Box Elder and Cache Stake conferences that followed a week later, wherein he stated that the Lord had revealed to him that the suspension of the practice of plural marriage was preferable to the sacrifice of work for the dead, was simply an afterthought—an act of expediency to satisfy the rebellious.\footnote{By this same reasoning it may be argued that the "Fundamentalist" position is also an act of expediency to satisfy those not in harmony with the Church.} It is needless to point out, however, that the Manifesto was regarded as divinely inspired right from the beginning, and the reason for its issuance as expressed by Marriner W. Merrill the day before it was published was the same as that expressed by President Woodruff at the Cache Conference: ". . . The article was approved by all the brethren present . . . which seems the only way to retain the possession of
our Temples and continue the ordinance work for the living and dead, which was considered more important than continuing the practice... for the present."

The reader may be amazed at the remaining arguments against the divine authenticity of the Manifesto—especially when advocated by those professing to be the expositors of "fundamental" Mormonism. One need not read far in holy writ to discover the absurdity of disregarding a particular revelation on the ground that its language is too "mild," or that its wording does not contain certain key words, or that certain persons did not attach their signatures thereto, or that the scrap of paper upon which it was originally written has not been produced. And yet, these are the objections that provide such conclusive evidence for the defamers of the Manifesto.

The objection against the "mild" wording of the Manifesto was answered by President Woodruff when asked, "Why didn't you declare [the Manifesto] to your Church as a revelation, and not by way of your personal advice and counsel?" He replied:

Well, men differ with regard to the principle of revelation. Of course my view is that inspiration is revelation; it is from the same source. A man is not always required to say 'Thus saith the Lord' in counsel or advice which he gives on certain matters.

... what I intended was to give counsel stopping the practice of the patriarchal order of marriage in the Church. As many words may not have been used, perhaps, in this matter as some might suppose should have been, but what I said to the people of our Church I said by inspiration, as I view it—by the mind and will of the Lord. I intended to give them to understand that we should stop the practice of plural marriage."

George Q. Cannon was also questioned on this subject as follows:

Q—This manifesto is the advice of President Woodruff personally?

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1 Supra, P. 176.  
2 Supra, P. 194-95.
A—Yes, sir.
Q—It is not a command, is it?
A—President Woodruff is a very modest man. It would have been a command if some men had issued it, and it was a command in his case. He was fully persuaded that the Church at large, like himself, received a testimony that this manifesto was issued by inspiration from God.¹

The foregoing statements serve to emphasize an aspect of Latter-day Saint doctrine mentioned by George Reynolds during the Smoot investigation, that "... there are various degrees of inspiration, in some of which the man simply has the ideas and he writes it in his own language."² To disregard the Manifesto on the ground that its contents are too mild or harsh, or that it lacks certain key words or phrases, presupposes that all revelation has been dictated by the Lord verbatim—an assumption that is invalidated, for the Latter-day Saint, by the variation of style in holy writ.

As a further objection to its authenticity, the assertion is

¹Supra, p. 196.
²Supra, pp. 216-17. According to Latter-day Saint doctrine, Joseph Smith received all the keys of authority "... that ever were or can be conferred upon mortal men." (Supra, p. 74. Inasmuch as this authority continued with each succeeding President of the Church, it is inconsistent to assume that President Woodruff did not have the authority necessary to suspend the practice of plural marriage, or that there were others of a "secret" or "higher" ordination who were not affected by the Manifesto. The "Fundamentalist" argument on this point betrays a lack of understanding concerning the keys of the priesthood and the succession of authority since the death of Joseph Smith. (Consult chapters III and IV for a detailed consideration of this subject.)

It should also be noted at this point that provision was made in the revelation on Priesthood given in March, 1835, for overruling any unrighteous decision that might be made by a presiding quorum of the Church: "... in case that any decision of these quorums is made in unrighteousness, it may be brought before a general assembly of the several quorums, which constitute the spiritual authorities of the Church; otherwise there can be no appeal from their decision." (Doctrine and Covenants, 107:32) Following the issuance of the Manifesto, it was presented to the Saints for their acceptance before such a general assembly. The voting was unanimous in favor thereof, and consequently, "... there can be no appeal from ... (that) decision. (Consult, supra, Pp. 180-81.)
made that the Manifesto does not contain enough signatures—that be-
cause Wilford Woodruff's counselors didn't sign, it does not bear the
stamp of divine approval. On this point George Q. Cannon observed:

... there is only one man at a time on the earth who holds
the keys of sealing, and that man is the President of the Church,
now Wilford Woodruff. Therefore, he signed that document himself.
Some have wondered and said, 'Why didn't his Counselors sign?
Why didn't others sign?' Well, I give you the reason—because he
is the only man on the earth that has this right, and he exercised
it, and he did this with the approval of all of us to whom the
matter was submitted... 1

If the attachment of counselors' signatures be the criterion
of an authentic revelation, then the Latter-day Saints may safely dis-
regard his entire canon of scripture.

If, in conclusion, the Manifesto were the fraud that has been
claimed of it, it is doubtful that the leaders of the Church would have
prescribed the test for determining its truthfulness, that was so often
used. "There is scarcely a move," observed George Q. Cannon, "that has
been made in the Church that has not conflicted with traditionary ideas
and the view that men entertained concerning the course that should be
pursued." 2 He added, however, that every Latter-day Saint has

... the privilege given unto them by the Lord to know for
themselves concerning all these matters, and there is no counsel
given by the Presidency of the Church, no step taken, nor no
policy pursued that they have to depend upon their personal in-
fluence to have the people believe, because the people can go to
God themselves, if they have doubts upon any point, and call upon
Him, in the name of Jesus, to reveal to them whether that which
is done or taught is from Him or not. They need not be in doubt.
They need not run around asking questions about matters which may
appear mysterious to them; but they can go to the Lord in their
secret places, and He will remove their doubts and answer their
questions, and He will throw light upon their minds respecting the
matters about which they may be disturbed. 3

1Ibid.  2Supra, p. 202.
3Supra, p. 179.
Referring to the Manifesto, the same speaker said:

... all that we can say to you is that which we repeatedly say to you—go unto God yourselves, if you are tried over this and cannot see its purpose; go to your secret chambers and ask God and plead with Him in the name of Jesus, to give you a testimony as He has given it to us, and I promise you that you will not come away empty, nor dissatisfied. . . .1

And again,

The Manifesto has been a stumbling block to some, and other things have tried the faith of the Latter-day Saints in varying degrees. . . .

If there ever was a time when the Saints stood in need of an individual, personal testimony of the truth of the Gospel which they have embraced, it surely is now, and they must have it or there is no security for them.

...................
Every individual has a right to a personal knowledge of the truth, and of the mind and will of God concerning his own personal affairs. Our Father does not ask you to walk in darkness, nor by another's light, but it is His good pleasure to give each one of you the light of His Holy Spirit in your own souls.

... It is your privilege to know for yourselves, not only if Joseph Smith was a true prophet, but whether Wilford Woodruff is God's own choice of a leader in His Church, if the Twelve Apostles are approved of Him, and all things whatsoever which concern you to know.

I would not give much for a Latter-day Saint who does not know these things . . . herein lies the strength of the Latter-day work.2

To the army of experts who have undertaken to explain the "real" intent of the Manifesto, a statement of one of their leaders is pertinent: "... Obviously the Prophet to whom a revelation is first entrusted is better able to interpret its meaning than those who follow after, and especially those of another generation and school of thought. . . ."3

1Supra, p. 183. 2Supra, Pp. 183-89.
3Joseph Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 8.
CHAPTER XI

PLURAL MARRIAGE SINCE THE MANIFESTO--THE "FUNDAMENTALIST" VIEW

John Taylor, not as President of the Church, but as President of Priesthood, took certain action Sept. 27, 1886. Had that action been taken as President of the Church, to render it legal, the Church would necessarily have had to approve it by vote as it later did the Manifesto of Wilford Woodruff:

... Acting, however, in purely a Priesthood capacity, as President Taylor did, he was within his rights and the Church was not involved.... It is for this reason the action of John Taylor could not be revoked by his successor in the Presidency of the Church--the Church having had nothing to do with the action.

It is true, after the death of John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, being the senior in ordination in the higher order of Priesthood, held a like position with that of his predecessor, but no authority came from Jesus Christ to him to cancel John Taylor's action. For while he issued a Manifesto stopping plural marriage within the Church--doing so as President of the Church--yet, in his Priesthood capacity, he appointed men and set them apart... to perform such marriages, an act clearly within the functions of Priesthood and above the jurisdiction of the Church...

The work of John Taylor will continue on unless and until changed by the Savior himself. Priesthood must ever be first. The Church is subordinate to it. This is fundamental. Priesthood can, has and will continue to function independent of the Church. ... 1

Basic to the "Fundamentalist" claim of authority to practice plural marriage today is the assertion that priesthood functions independently of the Church. Contending that "... the Church is officially on record, since the Manifesto of 1890, as prohibiting [plural marriages] within its jurisdiction," 2 they reason,

If priesthood cannot function except by permission of the


223
Church . . . by what authority were Brigham Young, Jr., Abraham H. Cannon, George Teasdale, John W. Taylor, Abraham O. Woodruff, Mathias F. Cowley, all members of the Quorum of Twelve, with scores of others, as published in the Salt Lake Tribune of October 10, 1910, permitted to receive plural wives after the Manifesto?1

The fact that the suspension of the practice of plural marriage by the Latter-day Saint Church in 1890 was followed by a period of adjustment during which a few plural marriages were contracted is conclusive evidence to the "Fundamentalists" that a high priesthood organization was functioning independent of the Church through which authority to solemnize plural marriages has continued to the present day.

The "Fundamentalists" assert that the Manifesto was issued as a result of a policy of appeasement adopted by the Church in 1890, and was originally intended to discontinue the practice of plural marriage within the Church only, leaving the "priesthood" to continue the practice "particularly outside of the jurisdiction of the United States."2 This policy was purportedly adopted as a prerequisite of Statehood for Utah, with the intention that once in the Union the Saints could then pass legislation favorable to the resumption of the practice of plural marriage.2 Consequently, in his capacity as President of the Church, Wilford Woodruff issued the Manifesto stopping plural marriages within the Church; however, ". . . in his Priesthood capacity, he appointed men and set them apart . . . to perform such marriages . . . above the jurisdiction of the Church."3

Although it was tacitly understood by the leading officials of the Church, continue the "Fundamentalists," that laws would be enacted

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3A Priesthood Issue, p. 25.
to renew the practice of plural marriage following the acquirement of statehood, an unanticipated situation arose before this policy could be carried out. A provision was inserted in the Enabling Act, to be incorporated into the Constitution for the State of Utah, which prescribed that polygamous marriages should be forever prohibited. This provision would thus seemingly obstruct the way for the renewal of the practice of plural marriage after statehood had been obtained. It is argued, however, that "since the law of Celestial or plural marriage is a vital part of the religion of the Letter-day Saints, it is not within the legal power of the Government to prohibit it."\(^1\) And further:

Since to obtain their natural rights the people of Utah were forced to make promises incompatible with their covenants with the Lord—promises that could not in harmony with their consciences be kept, they are not bound by civil law to keep such promises; no more so than the victim of a robbery, who, for his personal safety, promises not to call an officer, would be morally or legally bound to such a covenant. An agreement obtained by force, under American jurisprudence, is shorn of its legality and is rendered non-enforceable in the courts.\(^2\)

The "Fundamentalists" point out that although "Congress had a legal right to exact the promises mentioned," (in the Enabling Act) the citizens of the new state, "... had the right and the power to ... repeal the restrictions placed upon them by Congress."\(^3\) The reasoning on this point is derived from the Supreme Court decision in the case of Coyle v. Smith in which the right of the state to nullify Congressional demands forced into the constitution prior to statehood, was upheld and clarified.\(^4\)

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\(^1\)Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 83.

\(^2\)Ibid., pp. 83-89. \(^3\)Ibid., p. 89.

\(^4\)This particular case arose from a restriction imposed by Congress upon Oklahoma in its Enabling Act of 1906, which provided that
It is claimed that following the admission of Utah to the Union, "legislation favorable to the practice of polygamy as a religious rite was attempted," when a bill was introduced in the Utah legislature by Abel John Evans in March, 1901. The bill, "while not as broad in scope as the leaders had hoped for," was nevertheless, "a step in the right direction." Although it passed the House and the Senate, the measure failed of final enactment when Heber M. Wells, a Mormon Governor, vetoed it. "Thus again a Mormon, of polygamous descent--thwarted the will of the people and stayed legislation calculated to restore to the Saints their rights. . . ." From this, it is concluded that "... there has never been a time since statehood when the marriage system of the Church could not have been legalized. It could be today but for the apostacy of the Saints from the principle. . . ."

Regardless of the failure to enact legislation favorable to the renewed practice of plural marriage after the entrance of Utah into the Union, continues the "Fundamentalist" argument, the practice did nevertheless continue under the direction of the "high priesthood." And although, in April, 1904, President Joseph F. Smith found it necessary to officially reaffirm the Manifesto of 1890, and announce such marriages to be prohibited on the pain of excommunication, his action is explained on the following terms:

the new state should locate its capital at Guthrie and that it should irrevocably agree not to move it from that place before the year 1913. The court case resulted when, in 1910, a bill was approved moving the capital to Oklahoma City. (As cited in Ibid., pp. 89-90.)

1Truth, January 1940, p. 187-88.
2Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 92.
3Ibid., p. 91.
In the councils of the Church, President Smith was opposed to the issuance of the Manifesto of 1890. . . . His signature was not attached to the Manifesto; and . . . he absented himself from the October Conference of 1890, to avoid voting on the document. Not favoring it he did not wish to embarrass his brethren by voting against it, preferring the Saints exercise the fullest freedom in registering their votes either in acceptance or rejection of the measure.

. . . There are times . . . when men in public positions feel called upon, for policy's sake, to subordinate their individual feelings to the supposed interest of the whole. Unwise remarks and actions of so-called friends and of associates frequently call for acts of expediency in order to conserve the rights of others. Under such conditions statements may be made which are susceptible of different interpretations. This fact is borne out in the statement of 1904 and in subsequent statements of President Smith. They were acts of expediency and should be interpreted in the light of the many other declarations of the President given while not under the pressure of necessity.1

The "Fundamentalists" maintain that "under the Presidencies of Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith . . . means were continued for the perpetuation of the principle of plural marriage through Priesthood action, wholly separate and apart from the Church"2; however, under the Presidency of Heber J. Grant, the position ". . . that the Manifesto is a revelation from the Lord and must be obeyed both in letter and spirit—obtained ascendancy. . . ."3

In conclusion, the "Fundamentalists contend that the Church not only departed from its original teachings, but it has disclaimed those who have remained faithful:

With the efforts of the Church to streamline itself in the early 20's came a new Church President and a new Church policy regarding this sacred principle. The faithful and sacrificing years of the past were soon forgotten. The Church, in its effort to prove itself friendly with the world, began to unchurch those

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1Truth, September, 1943, p. 94.
2Ibid., January, 1941, p. 179.
3Ibid., p. 180.
of the old line Mormons who would not agree to relinquish their faith in the principles revealed through Joseph Smith. This mild judicial action finally, and inevitably, ripened into first rate persecution on the part of the Church Authorities, until to-day the leaders and the Saints feel that they are doing God a service when they succeed in placing men and women in prison for upholding this principle for which Joseph Smith gave his life.1

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1Ibid., January, 1950, p. 201.
CHAPTER XII

PLURAL MARRIAGE SINCE THE MANIFESTO--THE LATTER-DAY SAINT VIEW

Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff, of September 26, [sic] 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriages violative of the law of the land, I, Joseph F. Smith, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof and excommunicated therefrom.1

Although the Latter-day Saints unanimously accepted President Wilford Woodruff’s proclamation on September 25, 1890, discontinuing the practice of plural marriage, and the country at large generally acquiesced in the belief that he had acted in good faith, the question of authority to practice plural marriage was not completely settled for a few years to come. It is not surprising, from the zeal with which the doctrine of plural marriage had been defended, that the issuance of the Manifesto was followed by a period of adjustment. This came as a result of two questions which, many felt, had not been clearly answered in the announcement of President Woodruff. The first was

1President Joseph F. Smith at the April conference of the Church, 1904. Consult Conference Report, April, 1904, p. 74.
focused upon the relationship of the Manifesto to polygamous living. To what extent, it was queried, did the injunction in the Manifesto, to "refrain from contracting any marriages forbidden by the law of the land" apply to polygamous living, which also had been proscribed by Congressional legislation? In other words, was it necessary to forsake previous plural relationships in order to comply with the Manifesto? The second question for clarification was centered upon the validity of plural marriages contracted outside the confines of the United States. To what extent, it was asked, did the admonition to obey the laws of the land include plural marriages outside the jurisdiction of the United States government?

As pertaining to the question of polygamous living, it was hoped that the nation would accept the abandonment of future plural marriages as sufficient to satisfy the demands of the law, and allow those marriages previously contracted to remain unmolested. That such a settlement was anticipated is indicated from the number of those, who after 1890 continued to live and associate with their previously contracted plural families. This is also evident from the reaction of Wilford Woodruff to the proclamation of amnesty issued by President Benjamin Harrison in 1893. Upon hearing that amnesty had been granted to those who, since November, 1890, "had obeyed the law respecting unlawful cohabitation," President Woodruff maintained that the proclamation was "of little benefit to the people."\(^1\)

The question concerning "unlawful cohabitation" was finally

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\(^1\)Ibid., p. 289. Another petition was issued the following year by President Cleveland granting amnesty to all those who had obeyed the law respecting unlawful cohabitation since the Harrison proclamation.
settled during the constitutional convention that met in March, 1895, preparatory to the admission of Utah into the Union. By definition of the Enabling Act under which the convention had assembled, it was required that the proposed constitution include a provision forever prohibiting plural marriages. It was argued by some of those in attendance, however, that inasmuch as the Congressional anti-polygamy law would be ineffectual when Utah became a state, and inasmuch as the provision forever prohibiting plural marriages was not self-executing upon the statutes of the new state, consequently there would be nothing to hinder the future establishment of polygamy after statehood was achieved. To close this loophole, Charles S. Varian, the former district attorney, introduced an irrevocable ordinance to be inserted in the Constitution as an additional gesture of good faith by the people of Utah, guaranteeing the prohibition of plural marriages in the forthcoming state. Varian's measure, however, included only that part of the law which pertained to polygamy—intentionally omitting any reference to unlawful cohabitation. In this form the proposed constitution was accepted and Utah became a State.

This, then, was the solution to the polygamy question so far as the country was concerned: ". . . the fountain of the supposed evil--polygamous marriages--was to be dried up; the streams that had their origin from that fountain, in the past, to run their course until lost on death's plains."\(^1\)

The question pertaining to polygamous living was not completely forgotten, however; for, in 1896 the code commission, which was appoint-

\(^1\)Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 326.
ed to compile the laws of Utah, included in the statutes that invalid territorial law which proscribed cohabitation with one's plural families acquired prior to 1890. Upon ratification by the state legislature, this compilation thus technically saddled upon the State the old territorial law against polygamous living. Despite this action, however, it was generally held, by Mormons and non-Mormons alike, that the Constitutional Convention's adjustment of the polygamy question would remain the settled policy in Utah.1

In 1901 an effort was made to nullify the error of the code commission by enacting an amendment to remove the old "unlawful cohabitation" clause from the Utah statutes. However, passage of the amendment by the State senate on March 9, and by the House a few days later, brought a renewed wave of opposition from throughout the country, it appearing as if an effort were being made to legislate in favor of polygamy. Suspecting that the enactment of the amendment might trigger a more widespread agitation, Governor Heber M. Wells vetoed the bill, confident, however, that "the broadminded and intelligent everywhere accept the situation here as it exists, and are content to let time complete the solution of the problem"2

Although the country at large was generally satisfied with the solution of the polygamy question,3 there were still sporadic outbursts of dissension. By the turn of the century numerous accusations arose

1Ibid., p. 327.
2As cited in ibid., p. 329.
3A remark of the Sacramento Bee is an example of this: "The Bee has always held that our polygamy laws should severely punish any future disregard of the doctrine of monogamy, but should not seek to humiliate the wives of the past nor bastardize their children. About
from the Press of the country accusing the Church of a resumption of the practice of plural marriage, and that it had thereby broken its faith with the government. Such a charge appearing in the New York Times in November, 1899, was refuted by B. H. Roberts in a statement to that paper in which he reviewed the polygamy question as follows:

It is falsely charged that the Mormon Church has broken faith with the government of the United States in reference to polygamy, that is, it is charged that the practice of polygamous marriages has been resumed by the Church.

In the first place, it must be remembered that no compact exists between the 'Mormon' Church and the government of the United States on the subject of polygamy. The only compact existing on that subject is between the people of Utah, acting through their representatives in the State Constitutional convention, and the people of the United States represented by the President and Congress. To understand that compact is important, as by reason of it the whole vexed question of 'Mormon' polygamy was settled, and by understanding the nature of that compact the damnable iniquity of the present agitation appears. In the enabling act passed by Congress authorizing the people of Utah to form a State government it was expressly stipulated that the constitutional convention should 'provide by ordinance irrevocable without the consent of the United States and the people of said State . . . that polygamous or plural marriages are forever prohibited.' That was the only demand made upon this subject by the people of the United States. Congress could be induced to go no further, though an effort was made to have it do so. When in the Constitutional Convention the representatives of the people of Utah dealt with the requirement they adopted the very language of the enabling act. In addition to this the convention also adopted so much of a former territorial law as defined and provided for the punishment of polygamous marriages, and declared it to be in force in the State of Utah. This territorial law exactly paralleled the enactments of Congress on the same subject. It defined polygamy in the same terms as the Congressional enactments did, and provided the same penalties. It also defined unlawful cohabitation in the same terms as the acts of Congress. This offense is continuous living in polygamous relations after the illegal marriage relations have been formed, and in both the Congressional and Territorial legislation was made a misdemeanor, whereas polygamy was a felony. This law, I repeat, the convention cut in two, and

the meanest thing old Abraham did was to turn Hagar out into the wilderness. In that respect at least, Smith of Utah is a better man than was Abraham of Ur." (Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, March 8, 1904, p. 10ff.)
made the part punishing polygamous marrying part of the Constitution, while the part of the law defining and punishing continuous living in polygamous relations was discarded. Why? Because there was nothing in the enabling act that demanded the disruption of those existing marriage relations which had been entered into under the sanction of the 'Mormon' Church. It only required that 'polygamous or plural marriages' should be prohibited for the future. When it was suggested to the gentlemen who introduced the resolution making the above settlement that the part of the law defining and punishing unlawful cohabitation should also be included in the Constitution, he replied in effect that those were conditions he was not aiming to meet; that the enabling act only required that polygamous marriages for the future should be prohibited, and that is all that was done. All this appears in the officially reported and published debates of the Convention. That was the settlement of this question. That is the compact between the United States and the people of Utah. Those were the terms, so far as polygamy was concerned, on which Utah was admitted into the Union. And I affirm positively that that compact has been kept on the part of the people of Utah. . . .

Accusations continued on the subject of the resumption of the practice of plural marriage by the Church, resulting in a statement issued to the press by President Lorenzo Snow on January 8, 1900, which read as follows:

From the reading of the various editorials and articles of the public press it is evident that there is much misconstruction and misunderstanding as to the present attitude of our Church respecting the subjects of polygamy and unlawful cohabitation; and, believing that many good and conscientious people have been misled and much adverse criticism occasioned thereby, I feel it but just to both 'Mormons' and non-'Mormons' to state that, in accordance with the manifesto of the late President Wilford Woodruff, dated September 25th, 1890, which was presented to and unanimously accepted by our General Conference on the 6th of October, 1890, the Church has positively abandoned the practice of polygamy, or the solemnization of plural marriages, in this and every other State, and that no member or officer thereof has any authority whatever to perform a plural marriage or enter into such a relation. Nor does the Church advise or encourage unlawful cohabitation on the part of any of its members. If, therefore, any member disobeys the law, either as to polygamy or unlawful cohabitation, he must bear his own burden; or in other words, be answerable to the tribunals of the land for his own action pertaining thereto.

With a sincere desire that the position of our Church as to

1Deseret Evening News, November 23, 1899, p. 5.
polygamy and unlawful cohabitation may be better understood, and with best wishes for the welfare and happiness of all, this statement is made, and is respectfully commended to the careful consideration of the public generally.

LORENZO SNOW

President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.
Salt Lake City, Jan. 8, 1900.

Roberts' statement that the only compact existing on the subject of polygamy was "between the people of Utah, acting through their representatives in the State Constitutional convention, and the people of the United States represented by the President and Congress," as also the statement by President Snow that the practice of polygamy had been positively abandoned "in this and every other State," would allow room for a more liberal interpretation of the scope of the Woodruff Manifesto than had previously been implied—especially since some members of the Church felt that a universal application of the Manifesto had not been specifically inferred therein. If the only compact on the plural marriage question existed between the State of Utah and the government of the United States, it was felt that the Church being a universal organization might properly sanction the practice of polygamy outside the confines of the United States government. That such a view was entertained for a few years following statehood is seen from the following account of a meeting of the Church authorities:

... President Cannon said that men ought to be held to some responsibility as to their belief; if they were members of our Church holding the priesthood who did not believe in the Gospel, they were unworthy of the priesthood. If a man, even in these days were to proclaim his unbelief in the doctrine of plural marriage, he would not be worthy of the Priesthood. In fact, no man could worthily bear the Priesthood, and exercise the functions who rejected any of the principles of the Gospel. The speaker

1Ibid., January 8, 1900, p. 4.
added that Brother B. H. Roberts, who had recently attended the Cassia Stake conference, had reported that some brethren in that region were being accused by their Teachers of living in adultery with their plural wives. He said that he told Brother Roberts that it should be made clear to such teachers that when the Manifesto was issued we did not pledge ourselves to abandon our plural wives, nor even cease to perform plural marriages outside of the Government; and when our people get the idea that we have bound ourselves to the whole world they manifest ignorance. A man may go to some countries and not violate their laws by taking a plural wife and living in plural marriage. Turkey, for instance; that is, if the man holding the keys authorizes him to do so he would have a right to do this. It was wrong for the idea to go abroad among our people that we had abandoned the doctrine of plural marriage as a tenet of our faith, simply because the practice of marrying plural wives is forbidden.¹

Accusations against the Church charging a renewal of the practice of plural marriage continued--reaching a climax during the Senate investigation which followed the election of Reed Smoot as United States Senator from Utah in January, 1903. In a protest against his being seated, it was charged that he and his associates encouraged "... a belief in polygamy and polygamous cohabitation ... and connive at violations of the laws of the state prohibiting the same, regardless of pledges made for the purpose of obtaining statehood and of covenants made with the people of the United States..."² During the ensuing proceedings before the Senate Committee on Privileges and Elections, which lasted until 1907, a veritable army of witnesses was summoned to Washington to testify--during which scarcely a single phase of Latter-day Saint Church history or doctrine escaped the scrutiny of the investigators. One thing concluded from the Smoot case was that the Constitutional Convention settlement of the polygamy question was the policy being adhered to in Utah. It was also disclosed that plural

¹"Journal History," August 16, 1900, pp. 1-2.
²Smoot Case, I, 591-592.
marriages, if only on a limited basis, had been contracted since the Manifesto of 1890.

As a result of the renewed agitation against the Church which accompanied the Smoot investigation, President Joseph F. Smith, during the April Conference in 1904, issued another and more strongly worded statement on the subject of plural marriage:

Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff, of September 26, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriages violative of the law of the land, I, Joseph F. Smith, president of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, do hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; and I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the church, and will be liable to be dealt with according to the rules and regulations thereof and excommunicated therefrom.

JOSEPH F. SMITH
President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

They charge us with being dishonest and untrue to our word. They charge the church with having violated a 'compact,' and all this sort of nonsense. I want to see today whether the Latter-day Saints representing the church in this solemn assembly will not seal these charges as false by their vote.¹

¹Conference Report, April, 1904, p. 74. Just prior to its issuance this statement had been presented for the consideration of a few of the presiding officers of the Church: "At noon today, between the sessions of the Conference, the First Council of Seventy met at the office of the First Presidency, also . . . all the prominent presiding officers that could be reached handily; President Smith informed them that the Apostles met yesterday afternoon, also this morning at nine o'clock, for the purpose of considering the exigencies of the present, said to be existing in reference to alleged plural marriages having been solemnized; and he said that the First Presidency and Apostles had decided to issue an official declaration on the subject, which was then read to them. After which they were invited to support it at the conference this afternoon, if they felt they could do so, with the understanding that each person present was left free to express himself in regard to it. Questions were asked which drew from President Smith the statement that this declaration was nothing more nor less than
Following this statement, President Francis M. Lyman of the Quorum of the Twelve presented the following resolution for the consideration of the Church:

Resolved, That we, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in general conference assembled, hereby approve and endorse the statement and declaration of President Joseph F. Smith just made to this conference concerning plural marriages, and will support the courts of the church in enforcements thereof.

The resolution was seconded by a number of those present and subsequently adopted by the unanimous vote of the conference.

If some question had existed prior to this time concerning the scope of the Woodruff Manifesto, it became increasingly apparent that President Smith's announcement was the official word concerning the practice of plural marriage among the Latter-day Saints. This fact was manifest during the following years as efforts were made to cope with those who persisted in the practice of polygamy. A notable event in this connection was the resignation, in October, 1905, of John W. Taylor and Mathias Cowley of the Quorum of the Twelve who had been actively concerned in the matter of post-manifesto plural marriage.¹

¹In his letter of resignation, John W. Taylor made the following explanation of his action: "I have always believed that the government of the United States had jurisdiction only within its own boundaries, and that the term 'laws of the land,' in the Manifesto, meant merely the laws of the United States. I find now that this opinion is different to that expressed by the church authorities, who have declared that the prohibition against plural marriages extended to every part of the church. It is doubtless true that this view of the matter has been given by President Woodruff and others, but I have
Another indication of the finality of the action of President Smith in 1904 so far as the practice of polygamy was concerned is indicated from the record of Apostle Anthony W. Ivins a few years later, reporting a council meeting of the quorum:

... The question of plural marriages was discussed & it was decided in cases where plural marriages were entered into prior to 1904 the parties to such marriages shouldn't be molested unless they be cases where the interests of the Church are involved. Where men are in prominence in the Church who have taken plural wives since Prest. Woodruff's manifesto (they should) be removed where it can be done without giving unnecessary offence.¹

The proceedings in the Smoot investigation, which continued from 1903 until February, 1907, provided the necessary ingredients to keep the polygamy question before the public eye and create a frame of mind which elicited from the Church another statement in 1907 on the subject of plural marriage. After again reviewing the history of the polygamy question, the announcement, which was directed from "the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to the world," continued:

The 'Mormon' people have bowed in respectful submission to the laws enacted against plural marriage. While it is true that for many years they contested the constitutionality of the law of Congress, and during that time acted in harmony with their religious convictions in upholding by practice, as well as by spoken and written word, a principle committed to them from God, still, when every means of constitutional defense had been exhausted, the Church abandoned the controversy and announced its intention to be obedient to the laws of the land. Subsequently, when statehood for Utah became a possibility, on the condition that her constitution provide by ordinance, irrevocable without the consent of the United States, that Plural marriages should be forever pro-

never taken that as binding upon me or the church, because it was never presented for adoption by 'common consent' as was the Manifesto itself, and I have disputed its authority as a law or a rule of the church."

(Cited in Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 400.) Matthias F. Cowley expressed a similar view upon his resignation.

¹"Journal of Anthony W. Ivins" (Huntington Library, San Marino, California), January, 1911, p. 190.
hibrated, the 'Mormon' people accepted the condition by voting for the adoption of the constitution. From that time until now, the Church has been true to its pledge respecting the abandonment of the practice of plural marriage. If it be urged that there have been instances of the violation of the anti-polygamy laws, and that some persons within the Church have sought to evade the rule adopted by her, prohibiting plural marriages, the plain answer is that in every state and nation there are individuals who violate law in spite of all the vigilance that can be exercised; but it does not follow that the integrity of a community or a state is destroyed, because of such individual transgressions. All we ask is that the same common sense judgment be exercised in relation to our community that is accorded to other communities. When all the circumstances are weighed, the wonder is, not that there have been sporadic cases of plural marriage, but that such cases have been so few. It should be remembered that a religious conviction existed among the people, holding this order of marriage to be divinely sanctioned. Little wonder then that there should appear, in a community as large as ours, and as sincere, a few over-zealous individuals who refused to submit even to the action of the Church in such a matter, or that these few should find others who sympathized with their views; the number, however, is small.

This statement, issued over the signature of the First Presidency, was adopted by vote of the Church in the general conference, April 5, 1907.

It was not only with the sentiment of the country in general, but also with those "over-zealous individuals who refused to submit to the action of the Church," after it was reaffirmed in 1904, that concern was shown during the following years. It soon became apparent that a few individuals would still seek to defend and foster the practice of polygamy even at the expense of their standing in the Church. The ground upon which they proceeded, was that there existed within the Church an "inner-circle" upon whom the Manifesto of 1890 and the later announcement of President Smith in 1904 was not binding. It was

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1Conference Report, April, 1907, pp. 10-12.

2Loc. cit.
to discourage rumors on this point that much of the time was devoted at the special priesthood meeting held in conjunction with the April conference of the Church in 1906. Although brief, Anthony W. Ivins' resume of the meeting is enlightening as recorded in his journal:

April 9, 1906
Special Priesthood Meeting

... Many people are hurt in their feelings & are asking where are we going to get off? We are not going to get off at all. If a man comes to you and tells you that things are being done in the dark, that we are dealing unfairly with the world, that we are not absolutely fair in our dealing with the world, you tell them they lie. No man is authorized to solemnize plural marriages, and if any man comes to you and says this is for the world & not for you, it is false. It is for you as well as for the world.

Apostle Lyman ... I do not want it whispered that I am not in harmony with Prest. Smith or that he is not in accord with me, or that pressure has been brought to bear by the 12 against the Presidency or that the Presidency has brought pressure to bear on the 12. It is not true. We are united.

John Henry Smith - The Latter-day Saints must abide by the Manifesto.1

Ivins indicates that the same topic was a subject for consideration at a similar gathering six months later:

Special Priesthood Meeting Oct. 8, 1906, 10 A.M.

John R. Winder ... read from remarks of Prest. Smith April Conference 1904 regarding plural marriages. Also resolution presented by F. M. Lyman. It is said that the above was done simply for effect and was not intended to be enforced. That there is an inner circle where these things are better understood. There is no inner circle. The Presidency & Apostles are united to a man on this question and maintain the declarations made above & expect it to be enforced. There is no inner circle and this policy is sapping the faith of young people in the Church and we want every officer present to see that the policy of the Church is maintained. I am speaking for myself. Prest. Smith: 'You are speaking for all of us.'

F. M. Lyman: Expected to have spoken on the subject referred to by Prest. Winder. We hope there will be no misunderstanding in the future. The 12 are united with the Prest. & will maintain his position. ...

1Ivins, op. cit., pp. 157-58.
Prest. Smith: While Prest. Winder made himself clear I desire to make his remarks clearer. This whispering which has been so prevalent and which has brought some of our brethren into trouble is wrong. Every sensible man ought to know that when we make public assertions that we mean it, and when men come around Whis-pering that there are other counsels, that there is an inner circle desma [sic] they have received, and some of them have not received what they merited. The talk about Reed Smoot being the cause of this trouble is ridiculous nonsense. . . . 1

It soon became apparent that no amount of assurance from the leaders of the Church would suffice to convince everyone that authority to practice polygamy had definitely ceased. Rumors continued to grow that the practice of plural marriage was being secretly fostered and it was soon evident that a few individuals were arrogating to them-selves authority to perform such marriages. Consequently, efforts were made to locate and remove from fellowship in the Church those who per-sisted to advocate polygamy. 2

1Ibid., p. 159.

2Commencing in 1909 there are several instances in the Ivins Journal of persons being summoned before the Council of Twelve to answer charges of polygamy—a few of whom were later prominent in the "Fundamentalist" movement. One incident in this regard is particularly note-worthy here: "March 1st. 1914. In the evening P. K. Lemon called at the hotel. I served notice on him to appear before the Council of Twelve and show cause why he should not be excommunicated for unlawfully taking a wife. He stated to me that Nathan G. Clark had written him that if he wished to take a plural wife to come to Centerville where he—Clark—would meet him at a house 2 blocks West. He followed directions and went to the house of a young man named Woolley and told him what he came for. The young man said there would be a man there soon to attend to the matter for him. Later an older man came to him and performed the ceremony. After concluding the man told him that he must say no-thing about the marriage as they would both be excommunicated if it were found out. He told the girl, as soon as they were alone, that he did not believe it was a marriage at all, and it was all off. He had never lived with the girl as his wife and did not intend to do so un-til he had come to Salt Lake and satisfied himself that the ceremony was performed by proper authority. He had never talked with Bro. Cowley on the subject. He would appear before the Council and make a full statement of the facts. He had met Bro. Musser at the Fisher (home) some time ago and he had told him that Woolley had given the whole thing away." (Ibid., pp. 199-200.)
In a letter from the First Presidency on October 5, 1910, instructions on this subject were sent to the presidents of the stakes of Zion. After reciting the declaration of Joseph F. Smith in 1904, the letter stated:

After the Church had thus spoken plainly, we took it for granted that none of its members would be found disobeying its voice. But in the face of this action, emphasized repeatedly in private and public by us, and the Apostles as well, we now find that some person or persons have assumed authority to solemnize plural marriages, and that men and women have entered into polygamous relations through having been married under such pretended authority.

Some of the violators of this official action of the Church have been tried on their fellowship, and have been excommunicated. But there are rumors afloat (and some of these rumors appear to be well founded) that there are still others equally guilty, and it is to such cases that we desire to direct your attention. It is a matter of deep regret that men professing membership in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints should disregard the commands of the Church, and by doing so value their standing in it so lightly as to lay themselves liable to be excommunicated. Nevertheless it becomes our duty to request you to instruct each Bishop in your Stake to carry out the provisions of the foregoing resolutions by dealing with offenders, if any there be in his Ward, in accordance therewith.

We also desire to make it known to all the Saints in your Stake that no one has been authorized to solemnize plural marriages, and that he who advises, counsels or entices any person to contract a plural marriage renders himself liable to excommunication, as well as those who enter into unlawful relations.

Needless as it may appear, we wish to assure you that the attitude of the Church is the same today as when the foregoing resolution was adopted, and we hold that anyone violating this important rule and action not only commits an individual transgression but dishonors the Church as well. We therefore enjoin upon you to see to it that all such offenders are subjected to the discipline of the Church in the regular way.

Your brethren,

Joseph F. Smith,
Anthon H. Lund
John Henry Smith

Several times in the years to come it became necessary to reaffirm the position of the Church regarding the practice of plural

marriage. One such instance occurred at the close of the first decade of the twentieth century when a bitter attack was launched against the Church in a series of articles appearing in some of the leading magazines of the country.\(^1\) Included were charges on the well-worn subject of polygamy. A refutation of these charges was subsequently issued by the First Presidency of the Church and endorsed by the general conference in April, 1911, which included the following affirmation on the subject of plural marriages:

\[\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\ldots\]

The Church is accused of violating certain pledges to the national government. It is also asserted that the president of the Church receives several millions of dollars annually by enforced levies upon the members, this revenue being in his absolute control, unaccounted for and at his personal service. It is further alleged that he, with a few other ecclesiastics, dictates the political affairs of the State, sending Senators and Representatives to Congress, and ruling the community with an iron hand, to the subversion of individual liberty and the destruction of American citizenship. In support of these charges there is nothing presented except vituperation and the repetition of fictitious narratives, really grotesque in their palpable absurdity. We hereby denounce them as utterly false and without foundation.

First, as to pledges or compacts by the Church to the United States Government: This charge on its face, is ridiculous, no matter how often or forcibly it is repeated. The compacts or agreements between Utah and Government upon which statehood was achieved, were not made, and indeed could not be made, by the Church or its authorities. They were required by the enabling act framed by Congress and were fully complied with by the State and its Constitution, and this was officially announced in the President's proclamation. The only pledge made by the authorities of the Church that could be construed as a compact, was that contained in a petition for amnesty for certain persons who were in legal jeopardy, or imprisonment, upon charges growing out of the anti-polygamy laws of Congress. This was framed in December, 1891, and signed by the then President and Apostles of the Church, and the promise made was in these words:

'As shepherds of a patient and suffering people we ask amnesty for them, and pledge our faith and honor for their future.'

This may be coupled with the so-called manifesto of President Wilford Woodruff, adopted by the Church in conference assembled, October 6, 1890, in which he announced his intention to live

\(^1\)Roberts, Comprehensive History of the Church, VI, 413-14.
according to the laws of the United States, and declared: 'My advice to the Latter-day Saints is that they contract no marriage contrary to the laws of the land.' Since that time the Church has not performed any plural marriages or authorized any violation of the law thus forbidden. But there were some persons who construed the language of that manifesto to signify plural marriages within the boundaries of the United States, that being 'the land' wherein the laws spoken of extended. They, therefore, went or removed to Mexico and thus acted on that which they believed to be right without violating the manifesto. They looked on plural marriage within the United States as malum prohibitum and not malum in se.

When this condition was discovered, a further declaration was made by President Lorenzo Snow, who succeeded President Woodruff, in which he announced that the manifesto extended to every place, and that 'the Church has positively abandoned the practice of polygamy, or the solemnization of plural marriages in this and every other State, and that no member or officer thereof has any authority whatever to perform a plural marriage or enter into such a relation.' This was published in the Deseret News at Salt Lake City, January 6, 1900.

Rumors of surreptitious unions contrary to these official announcements being circulated, the present President of the Church, on April 6, 1904, reiterated the universality of the inhibition, and proclaimed that any person entering into or performing a plural marriage would be liable to be dealt with according to the rules of the Church and excommunicated therefrom.

Such violations of these positive declarations as have been reported, wherever proven by sufficient evidence, have been dealt with by Church tribunals and the offenders have been disciplined or excommunicated. This course will be maintained, with due regard to the rights of individuals and the laws of the Church, common rumor or gossip without evidence being insufficient in a trial, either civil or ecclesiastical. We protest against the charge that the Church or its leading officers encourage the resumption of plural marriages, and hereby declare the same to be absolutely false.


Joseph F. Smith
Anthon H. Lund
John Henry Smith
First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.1

Speaking more specifically to the Church membership at the same conference (April, 1911), President Joseph F. Smith asserted:

... There isn't a man today in this Church or anywhere else, outside of it, who has authority to solemnize a plural marriage--

1Improvement Era, June, 1911, pp. 720-22.
not one! There is no man or woman in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who is authorized to contract a plural marriage. It is not permitted, and we have been endeavoring to the utmost of our ability to prevent men from being led by some designing person into an unfortunate condition that is forbidden by the conferences, and by the voice of the Church, a condition that has to some extent, at least, brought reproach upon the people. I want to say that we have been doing all in our power to prevent it or to stop it; and in order that we might do this, we have been seeking, to our utmost, to find men who have been the agents and the cause of leading people into it. We find it very difficult to trace them but when we do find them, and can prove it upon them, we will deal with them as we have dealt with others that we have been able to find.¹

Efforts to remove from fellowship in the Church those who wilfully continued to advocate and practice polygamy, which had begun under the Presidency of Joseph F. Smith were continued by his successor, Heber J. Grant. It was during the presidency of the latter (1918-1945), that many of those who were later prominent in the "Fundamentalist" and "Church of the Firstborn" movements were severed from the Church²—a fact which no doubt explains the bitter antagonism toward President Grant that pervades much of the literature of these factions.³ Like his predecessor, Heber J. Grant occasionally found it necessary

¹Conference Report, April, 1911, p. 8.

²A few of those who were excommunicated from the Church during this period were: John Y. Barlow, April 1, 1919; Joseph W. Musser, March 19, 1921; Lorin Woolley, January 15, 1924; Joseph L. Broadbent, July 13, 1929; Joel F. LeBaron, May 2, 1944; Ervil LeBaron, June 6, 1944; Benjamin LeBaron, June 6, 1944; Alma D. LeBaron, July 9, 1944. The LeBarons currently preside over the "Church of the Firstborn of the Fulness of Time" with headquarters in Mexico. The remainder were prominent in "Fundamentalist" circles in Salt Lake City.

³Joseph Musser notes that for years after the Manifesto the Church took a quiescent attitude toward the principle of plural marriage, but "not until Heber J. Grant became President of the Church was any move inaugurated to stomp the principle out and persecute those adhering to it." (The Law of Plural Marriage, p. 6.)
to warn the Church against those professing authority to solemnize plural marriages—as evidenced in this statement during the April Con-
ference, 1921:

A revelation was given to the Church ninety years ago last February from which I have read during this conference, and I will read from it again. This revelation is to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or the elders in it.

'Oh, hearken, ye elders of my church, and give an ear to the words which I shall speak unto you.

'For behold, verily, verily, I say unto you, that ye have received a commandment for a law unto my church, through him whom I have appointed unto you, to receive commandments and revelations from my hands.'

I want to emphasize once more, 'A law unto my church.'

'And this ye shall know assuredly that there is none other appointed unto you,' (Who? 'my church,') 'to receive command-
ments and revelations until he be taken, if he abide in me.

'But verily, verily, I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him, he shall not have power except to appoint another in his stead;

'And this shall be a law unto you,' (and who is this law unto? 'Unto my church,') 'that ye receive not the teachings of any that shall come before you as revelations or commandments;

'And this I give unto you that you may not be deceived, that you may know they are not of me.

'For verily I say unto you, that he that is ordained of me shall come in at the gate and be ordained as I have told you be-
fore, to teach those revelations which you have received, and shall receive through him whom I have appointed.'

And I said that anybody who taught contrary to that was a plain, simple, every-day liar. That is what I said; that is what I mean. The idea that any man claiming to believe the teachings of this revelation saying that he has today the right to perform plural marriages, is utterly absurd. We have cut such men off from the Church.

Perhaps I owe an apology—in fact I will make one—for speaking with anger in this building last Sunday night. As I came to the meeting Sunday night, I was told that a person had said that neither Heber J. Grant nor any other man had any right to say that an individual could not perform a plural marriage; that God had revealed plural marriages, and therefore that I had no right to say that they could not be performed, and that one party had re-
marked that it would take an angel from heaven to convince him, even if I did say it. In my remarks on Sunday evening I had no thought of referring to anybody outside of this Church, or that I ever had any right to undertake to say that I had anything to do with directing any other people than the Latter-day Saints. But I branded as plain, simple liars those who undertake to say that anybody, aside from the President of the Church, had any right to
give revelations to this people. I had just heard that one
more pretended plural marriage had been performed, and after all
the teachings from this stand, and all the declarations, and after
excommunicating, as we have done, within the last year, one man
for marrying—or pretending to marry—a plural wife, I confess I
was angry and 'rebuked with sharpness.'

But I want to say to the Latter-day Saints that no man upon the
face of the earth has any right or any authority to perform a
plural marriage, and there are no plural marriages today in the
Church of Christ, because no human being has the right to perform
them. Therefore, any person pretending to have that right is
attempting to exercise an authority that he does not have, and
therefore he does not perform a marriage and there is no marriage
covenant when such ceremonies are performed.

We have excommunicated several patriarchs because they arrogated
unto themselves, the right, or pretended right, to perform these
ceremonies, and after our having excommunicated several patriarchs,
another one, so I am informed, has committed the same offense. I
announce to all Israel that no living man has the right to perform
plural marriages. I announce that no patriarch has the right to
perform any marriages at all in the Church. We have delegated, at
the present time, to the presidents of stakes and to the bishops
of wards, the right to perform lawful marriages, and there has
been delegated to some elders who held positions as county clerks,
the right to exercise the authority of the Priesthood to perform
legal marriages for time. And it was in view of the lie that was
going out, and a desire to protect virtuous, noble, good girls who
were being deceived and entrapped into doing what, under the law
of God today, and under the law of the land, is adultery, that I
was branding the liar.¹

An announcement at the October conference, 1926, indicates that
the assumed authority to solemnize plural marriages was still a subject
for concern:

Notwithstanding frequent verbal and printed instructions issued
by President Joseph F. Smith and counselors to the effect that the
solemnization of plural marriages was prohibited by the Church of
Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, and these instructions have
been reiterated time and time again by myself as President, cases
occasionally arise where certain individuals are teaching that it
is legitimate to enter into plural marriage, and that such mar-
rriages can be performed by certain members of the Church claiming
to have authority to do so.

The revelations of the Lord inform us most plainly that there
is but one man on the earth at a time who holds the keys of this
sealing power; namely, the President of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter-day Saints. As President of the Church, I once again

¹Conference Report, April, 1921, pp. 201-202.
solemnly declare that no man living has the authority to solemnize a plural marriage; and I hereby announce that it is the bounden duty of every Latter-day Saint, male and female, who knows of any such pretended marriage being performed, to inform the proper officers of the Church, in order that the Church's honor may be maintained and that such individuals may be dealt with according to the rules and regulations of the Church and excommunicated therefrom.¹

It was apparently not long after the "second manifesto" in 1904 that small groups of zealots for polygamy banded together in order to consolidate their efforts. Although it is not exactly known how soon the "Fundamentalist" movement was formed, it may be surmised that by the 1930's it was well under way. The issuance about that time (1929) of a statement by Lorin Woolley purporting to be an eye-witness account of the establishment of the "Fundamentalist" movement in 1896,² was but one manifestation of a vigorous propaganda campaign against the Church. So unprincipled became some of the accusations against the Church and its leaders that President Grant found it necessary to dwell at length upon the subject at the opening session of the general conference in April, 1931:

I desire to bring to the attention of the members of the Church some very regrettable and most annoying circumstances. I have taken occasion in times past to denounce the conduct of persons both within and without the Church who have palpably sought to bring disgrace upon the Church and reproach to its leaders in the circulation of propaganda for and the unlawful practice of pretended 'plural marriage.' Notwithstanding the positive, unequivocal declarations which I have made from time to time on this subject, and in spite of the vigorous and unvarying prosecution within the courts of the Church, from the tribunals of the bishops to the Council of the Twelve Apostles, of cases arising out of violations of the law of the Church forbidding absolutely the practice of plural marriage—withstanding all these efforts on the part of the authorities of the Church to suppress the unlawful

¹Conference Report, October, 1926, p. 12.
practices and propaganda of these people, we find that there are still a number, relatively small we hope, who persist in teaching the doctrine and maligning the leaders of the Church.

Wherever the Authorities of the Church have been able to locate such persons and secure sufficient definite evidence to warrant their conviction, they have, without fear or favor, been dealt with and excommunicated from the Church. This procedure is the limit of Church jurisdiction. We have been, however, and we are entirely willing and anxious too, that such offenders against the law of the State should be dealt with and punished as the law provides. We have been and we are willing to give such legal assistance as we legitimately can in the criminal prosecution of such cases. We are willing to go to such limits not only because we regard it as our duty as citizens of the country to assist in the enforcement of the law and the suppression of pretended 'plural marriages,' but also because we wish to do everything humanly possible to make our attitude toward this matter so clear, definite, and unequivocal as to leave no possible doubt of it in the mind of any person.

There are always to be found in any large group of people some who are uninformed, credulous, and easily susceptible to the persuasions of more forceful personalities. Such persons are often well-meaning and at heart very devoted to the Church. It is a matter of sorrow and deep regret to us that some such members of the Church have been inveigled by some designing men and fanatics into the support and practice of unlawful relations. It is largely for the protection of such class of people within the Church and similarly minded converts to the Church that we feel the necessity of stressing this unpleasant subject so much.

The machinations of the proponents of unlawful marriages are, of course, carried on largely in secret. The Church has no adequate way of thwarting their endeavors before much harm is often done, although the officers of the Church, from the highest to the least, are definitely instructed to be constantly on the watch for such teaching and propagandists. We have hesitated somewhat to make public statements or denials to charges and false assertions published in literature sent out by these enemies of the Church and its administration, because we have felt that added publicity to their pernicious statements would be gratifying to them and probably useless in stemming their activity. There is scarcely a man among the leading authorities who has not been defamed by them, both in print and speech.

They have circulated their literature as widely as possible with their available means, even sending defamatory pamphlets to the missionaries of the Church in their fields of labor, extending to Europe. We suppose that in some instances this material may fall into the hands of investigators, weak members of the Church, and others who already, by reason of misrepresentation, are prejudiced against us. There are some, undoubtedly, among these who give credence to that which they read, although, of course, we should be able to expect and we do expect that no missionary of the Church would credit such false assertions.

These publications are not only slanderous of the leaders of
the Church but they are calculated to cast a blemish on the fair name of our State. Their authors are apparently without conscience as to the truth of their statements, seeking only to influence those who are uninformed and gullible. They have charged me and many of my brethren here with the commission of crime and have manufactured circumstances as fictitious as the imagination may conceive. We have felt that it was beneath us to make reply to such false and malignant accusations. We have believed that neither the people of the Church nor those outside the Church with whom we live as neighbors and fellow citizens would expect us to answer. If there are any of our brothers or sisters or friends who feel that there are any circumstances which warrant an answer or defense on our part, we assure any such we shall be glad to satisfy them on their request. And when we say our friends we mean our friends, not those who write anonymous letters, or individuals who make false statements about us.

Perhaps we are presumptuous, but we feel that our standing in the community as men of integrity and honor is a sufficient rebuttal to these infamous charges made against us.

In most instances the misrepresentations and false accusations have been made by way of recital and innuendo, with an apparent effort to shield the authors and publishers from legal responsibility. In one recent instance, however, they have been bold enough to print a libelous attack on President John A. Widtsoe, supposedly because they knew of his expected presence here for conference. The circumstances recited are wholly fictitious and false, and are presented, undoubtedly, with the purpose of creating prejudice against him and injuring his work in Europe. We think that the high esteem in which Doctor Widtsoe is held, not only in the Church but in his State and as a national figure, makes unnecessary any reply to such calumny. However, if he desires he may have the facilities we can afford to protect himself and to prosecute the defamers of his good name.

Now, in conclusion, let me state again, as I have done many times before—and my statement is meant for every member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, for our neighbors and friends who dwell in the communities where we live, and for the whole world—that the Church does not countenance, aid, abet, tolerate or sanction in any way, shape or form the contracting of so-called 'plural marriages,' but that on the contrary it absolutely forbids the members of the Church from entering into any such unlawful relations or teaching or encouraging such practices, and that it will continue in the future as it has done in the past to deal with and punish to the extent of its authority any persons who violate these injunctions. I do not know how to make it plainer or more forceful. If I did I would do so.

As I read this I recall that the statement is made that the leaders of the Church can practice these things. So when this is published I will say that this applies to all the General Authorities of the Church and the members, for fear these falsifiers will start another falsehood.

I want the officers of our Church, our missionaries, all who in any manner represent us, to know beyond any doubt whatsoever that
this is the straightforward, honest, unequivocal position of the Church, and I want them all to know that any person or persons who question this assertion cast reflection upon the honor and integrity of the men who stand at the head of the Church as its General Authorities, for this statement sets forth not only my own views and purposes, but it is sustained in every detail, in letter and in spirit, by each and every member of the First Presidency, the Council of the Twelve Apostles, the Presiding Patriarch, the First Council of Seventy, and the Presiding Bishopric, to whom it has been submitted and by whom it has been unanimously approved.

And I wish to say that I want it understood that so far as God gives me power to give His word to the people, it is the word of the Lord.

Now, I cannot do more. Of course the circumstances to which I have called attention are very provoking and annoying to us. It is easy to become angry when we contemplate the harm and incalculable injury that some of these perverted, vicious men have perpetrated on the Church, but I do not speak in anger. I have in mind only the welfare and the progress of the great cause which we represent and live, and the people who are within the Church and those to whom we are carrying the Gospel. It hurts me to see the advancement of the work retarded by such regrettable activities within the Church itself. We may always hope that within the Church our solemn statements of fact and principle will be received at face value.

It may be that among those who so malign the Church and its leaders are some who are conscientious in their endeavors. I am sorry that they are so simple and misguided as to permit themselves to be allied with those who, by reason of their propaganda and activity, are among the most malicious enemies of the Church. I pray that their eyes may be opened and their course set right. I pray also that all the people of the Church in all parts of the world may unite in a determined effort to abolish from the inside of the Church at least these insidious efforts and unlawful practices which are calculated to bring so much reproach upon us.

The same people who are publishing these slanderous statements have also said that the presiding officers of the Church have used the credit of the Church and involved it in debt to the extent of $23,000,000.00, mortgaging its property to secure this indebtedness.

The fact is that during my administration no part of the property of the Church has ever been mortgaged, and the Church itself is entirely free from debt.

In proof of what I have said, I read the statement of the Church Auditing Committee, as follows:

April 4th, 1931.

President Heber J. Grant and Counselors,
Dear Brethren:

It gives us pleasure to state that our examination of the reports of the First Presidency's office, which covered the Presiding Bishop's department, disclosed the fact that the Church is entirely out of debt.
The accounting system of the Church is modern and complete.
Respectfully submitted,
Henry H. Rolapp,
O. W. Adams,
Auditing Committee.'

It is against the law of the land to enter into polygamy. In section 58 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we find the following:
'For verily I say unto you, my law shall be kept on this land.
'Let no man think he is ruler; but let God rule him that judgeth, according to the counsel of his own will, or, in other words, him that counseleth or sitteth upon the judgment seat.
'Let no man break the laws of the land, for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.'

'Wherefore, be subject to the powers that be, until he reigns whose right it is to reign, and subdues all enemies under his feet.'

I would like all those in this congregation who feel to sustain this statement that I have read to you to manifest it as the Apostles and all the General Authorities have done, by raising their right hands.
(The congregation responded by raising their hands).
I have never seen such a lot of hands held so high in my life.
All those who are opposed to this statement will please raise their hands.
(No hands were raised).
Our enemies do not seem to be here.

The Prophet Joseph, at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple, in the prayer offered on that occasion, among other things said:
'We ask thee, Holy Father, to confound and astonish, and to bring to shame and confusion, all those who have spread lying reports abroad, over the world, against thy servant or servants, if they will not repent, when the everlasting gospel shall be proclaimed in their ears;

'And that all their works may be brought to naught, and be swept away by the hail, and by the judgments which thou wilt send upon them in thine anger, that there may be an end to lyings and slanders against thy people.'

We say Amen to the prophet's prayer on that occasion.

In my remarks today I desire to read from the holy scriptures some of the words of the Savior, and also from the revelations that have come to us in our day.

'Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

'Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.

'A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

'Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire.

'Wherefore, by their fruits ye shall know them.'

What kind of fruits do the people to whom I have referred bring forth? I know of no more outrageous falsifying in my life than has
been indulged in by these people. One man by the name of Lorin C. Woolley said that Anthony W. Ivins and Heber J. Grant went to Los Angeles, that he followed them, that they went into a hotel and that Anthony W. Ivins married a plural wife to Heber J. Grant.

Anthony W. Ivins and Heber J. Grant were never in a hotel together in Los Angeles. Heber J. Grant has never suggested to any human being during his entire administration as President of the Church that anybody should ever enter into plural marriage. On the contrary, every man or woman who has ever opened his or her mouth to him on this subject he has taught to the contrary.

'And everyone that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which build his house upon the sand;

'And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell; and great was the fall of it.'

Those who have heard my counsel for at least twelve years, to say nothing of that of my predecessors and others, to obey the laws of the land and do not do it, are building their houses upon sand, and they are absolutely certain to fall.

I call to mind that we tried a man by the name of Barlow for entering into pretended plural marriage years ago. This man brought to us a letter purporting to come from Owen Woodruff, who was dead, telling him to send the person to Mexico, stating that Owen Woodruff married this girl to him. And there was not a word of truth in it. I went to his stenographer and confronted her, and she acknowledged that she wrote the postscript on the letter herself. After Owen Woodruff had been dead for years a man whose name I will not mention because he repented of his sins, acknowledged that he performed that marriage.

What do you think of such falsifiers talking about the leaders of the Church apostatizing and that they are the reformers?1

The gradual consolidation of the "Fundamentalist" position with its intensified propaganda campaign against the Church was the object of a final statement by the First Presidency on June 17, 1933. In pamphlet form the announcement was addressed to the "Presidents of Stakes and Counselors":

As persistent reports are coming to us of activity by a group said to be propagating a false doctrine and illegal practice of polygamous or plural marriage, (the group apparently being composed of avowed or virtual apostates from the Church, of persons excommunicated from the Church, and of a few misguided but otherwise faithful members of the Church) we have deemed it wise to

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1Conference Report, April, 1931, pp. 5-11.
issue, under date of June 17th, 1933, and by way of warning and exhortation, an Official Statement which calls attention to the activities of that group, and which points out that neither the group nor its activities are in any way connected with the Church, that not only are the activities unauthorized and therefore illegal and void, but that they are contrary to the rule of the Church and the will of the Lord as revealed through President Woodruff and adopted by the Church, and that marriages performed by members of this group are false and mock marriages.

It is almost unnecessary to add that the activities of this group are violative of the laws of the land and that certain of the group members seem subject to criminal prosecution.

We desire that this matter shall be fully and directly called to the attention of every Latter-day Saint, that none shall be in ignorance of the falsity of the doctrines or of the illegality of the practices of this group, nor in doubt as to the spiritual falling away of its members and those who follow them, nor unaware of the Church disciplinary measures which must be taken against unrepentant participants in this unrighteous and rebellious activity.

Any Church member belonging to this group or adopting or advocating its doctrines and practices is not to be considered in good fellowship in the Church, is not entitled to and should not be granted any of the rights and privileges appertaining to Church members—such as entry into the temples, the payment of tithes, participation in the activities of the priesthood quorums or of the auxiliary organizations of the Church, or in other Ward, Stake, or Church activities—and should, unless now truly repenting, be immediately and formally dealt with by excommunication, as directed in the Official Statement.

The great law-abiding, faithful Church membership cannot and must not be brought into disrepute, nor their honor and good faith challenged, by a small group of recalcitrant and evilly-led Church members in rebellion.

To this end we are sending you by current mail sufficient copies of the Official Statement and of this letter to enable you to supply each Bishop in your Stake with one copy of each, and to have one copy of each for yourselves. You will designate a Sunday in your Stake at which this letter and this Official Statement may be read in the regular sacrament service, preferably the First Sunday Fast service, and you will instruct each Bishop in each of the Wards of your Stake to have both these documents carefully and clearly read at such designated service.

Each President of Stake and each Bishop will proceed immediately to correct any situation of the kind described and existing within his jurisdiction. There must be no condoning of or trifling with this rebellious condition which must be brought to an end at once.

Yourselves and each Bishop should preserve these documents and should give to each person desiring to read and study them, full opportunity so to do. Sincerely your brethren in the Gospel,

Heber J. Grant
A. W. Ivins
The "Official Announcement," which also appeared in the Deseret News on June 17, 1933, began with these words:

The First Presidency have recently received letters making inquiry concerning the position of the Church regarding the contracting of polygamous or plural marriages. It is evident from these letters, as well as from certain published material--some of it distributed during our last General Conference--that a secret and, according to reputation, an oath-bound organization of misguided individuals is seeking to lead the people to adopt adulterous relations under the guise of a pretended and false polygamous or plural marriage ceremony.

While the position of the Church since 1893 has been repeatedly set forth, namely, that polygamous or plural marriages are not and cannot now be performed, yet in order that there may be no excuse for any Church member to be misled by the false representations or the corrupt, adulterous practices of the members of this secret, and (by reputation) oathbound organization (of which the history of the Nephites and Lamanites show so many counterparts), it is deemed wise again to set out the position of the Church on this matter, at the same time tracing the outlines of the historical facts lying behind the Church's position, of which many young Church members may not be fully aware.²

The remainder of the announcement was devoted to a concise review of the history of plural marriage and a refutation of some of the charges against the Church--closing with this statement:

The keys of the sealing ordinances rest today solely in President Heber J. Grant, having so passed to him by the ordination prescribed by the Lord, at the hands of those having the authority to pass them, and whose authority has never been taken away by the Lord, nor suspended, nor interfered with by the Church. President Grant is the only man on the earth at this time who possesses these keys. He has never authorized any one to perform polygamous or plural marriages; he is not performing such marriages himself; he has not on his part violated nor is he violating the pledge he made to the Church, to the world, and to our government at the time of the Manifesto.

Any one making statements contrary to the foregoing is

¹Official Statement from the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, June 17, 1933, pp. 1-2.

²Ibid., pp. 3-4.
innocently or maliciously telling that which is not true. Any one representing himself as authorized to perform such marriages is making a false representation. Any such ceremony performed by any person so making such representations is a false and mock ceremony. Those living as husband and wife under and pursuant to the ceremonies proscribed by President Smith or the ceremonies performed by any person whatsoever since that proscription, are living in adultery and are subject to the attaching penalties.

We reaffirm as true today and as being true ever since it was made in 1904, the statement of President Smith which you endorsed by a General Conference of the Church 'that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent, or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.'

Finally, we are in honor bound to the government and people of the United States, upon a consideration we have fully received—Statehood—to discontinue the practice of polygamous or plural marriage, and Latter-day Saints will not violate their plighted faith.

The Church reaffirms its adherence to the declarations of Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow and Joseph F. Smith.

It adheres to the pledges made to the government of the United States, and to the Constitutional law of the State of Utah.

We confirm and renew the instructions given to Church officers by President Joseph F. Smith in 1904, in 1910, and in 1914, and direct the officers who administer the affairs of the Church diligently to investigate reported violations of the adopted rule, and if persons are found who have violated President Smith's ruling (adopted by the Church) or who are entering into or teaching, encouraging, or conspiring with others to enter into so-called polygamous or plural marriages, we instruct such officers to take action against such persons, and, finding them guilty, to excommunicate them from the Church in accord with the directions given by President Smith. We shall hold Church officers responsible for the proper performance of this duty.¹

A consideration of the practice of plural marriage shows that the Latter-day Saints attributed the inauguration thereof, as also its suspension, to the Almighty; and although the suspension of the practice was followed by a period of adjustment which grew partly out of the zeal for the principle, and partly from a lack of clarity in the terms of its suspension, the time came when all those who were not wilfully or ignorantly committed against the Church, were convinced that authority to practice plural marriage had ceased.

¹Tbid., pp. 19-21.
CHAPTER XIII

PLURAL MARriage SINCE THE MANIFESTO—AN EVALUATION

... There isn't a man today in this Church or anywhere else, outside of it, who has authority to solemnize a plural marriage—not one! There is no man or woman in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints who is authorized to contract a plural marriage. It is not permitted, and we have been endeavoring to the utmost of our ability to prevent men from being led by some designing person into an unfortunate condition that is forbidden by the conferences, and by the voice of the Church, a condition that has to some extent, at least, brought reproach upon the people. ... ¹

A review of the events following the issuance of the Manifesto by Wilford Woodruff on September 25, 1890, leaves no room for doubt that authority to practice plural marriage among those professing a belief in the restored gospel was definitely discontinued. It is contended, however, by polygamous factions that the Manifesto was part of a policy of appeasement embarked upon by the Church in 1890, whereby certain concessions would be openly made, giving the illusion that polygamy had ceased, but that in reality it would continue by authority of a special priesthood organization stemming from the same source, but functioning above and independent of the Church. This position embodies the following points:

(A) The fact that the issuance of the Manifesto was followed by a period of adjustment during which a few plural marriages were per-

¹Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church, at the April Conference, 1911. (Consult, Conference Report, April, 1911, p. 8.)
formed, is definite evidence of a "high priesthood" organization operating independent of the Church. For, argue the "Fundamentalists," if Priesthood cannot function except by permission of the Church, by what authority were scores of individuals permitted to receive plural wives after the Manifesto?¹

(B) Although the practice of plural marriage was "forever prohibited" by provision of the Enabling Act in 1894, and the subsequent constitutional convention, such action was not legally binding upon the Latter-day Saints after statehood was achieved.²

(C) That laws favorable to the practice of plural marriage would be enacted following statehood, "was tacitly understood" by the immediate successors of President Woodruff. Consequently "legislation favorable to the practice of polygamy"³ was attempted after statehood, but because of the apostasy of the Church the program was never carried out.³

(D) Upon the ascendancy of Heber J. Grant as President of the Church, the policy of continuing the practice of plural marriage "through Priesthood action"⁴ was no longer recognized, resulting in persecution by the Church of those who continued to uphold the principle "for which Joseph Smith gave his life."⁴

The "Fundamentalist" argument for a high priesthood organization functioning independent of the Church has been shown to rest upon a faulty interpretation of Latter-day Saint Church history. Nor is their argument on this point strengthened by the contention that

since the Manifesto was declared to be binding upon all members of
the Church and since a few plural marriages were contracted after
1890, they therefore must have been authorized by a higher authority.

As noted above, evidence indicates that for a few years after
1890 the practice of plural marriage outside the jurisdiction of the
United States government was not regarded by some of the Saints as an
infraction against the Manifesto. This apparently arose from a feeling
that since a universal application of the Manifesto had not been speci-
fically voted upon by the Church, and since the provision forever pro-
hibiting plural marriages, as incorporated in the State Constitution,
was an agreement between the State of Utah and the Government of the
United States alone, that plural marriages might properly be performed
outside the confines of the United States. This sentiment is reflected
in the statement of George Q. Cannon in 1900 that "... when the Mani-
feito was issued we did not pledge ourselves to ... cease to perform
plural marriages outside of the Government; and when our people get the
idea that we have bound ourselves to the whole world they manifest
ignorance. ..."1 Even rumors that a few plural marriages were per-
formed within the confines of the United States during this time, are
not surprising to anyone acquainted with the intensity with which the
doctrine had been defended and practiced by the Saints prior to 1890.
For the Latter-day Saints, the crux of the matter is not so much whether
plural marriages were solemnized after 1890, as whether such marriages
were authorized by the President of the Church. "A man may go to some
countries and not violate their laws by taking a plural wife and living

1Supra, P. 236.
in plural marriage . . . if the man holding the keys authorizes him to
do so. . . ."¹ Although there is evidence that plural marriages were
contracted on a limited basis after 1890, the "Fundamentalists" fail to
recognize that a time soon came when plural marriages were universally
prohibited among the Latter-day Saints. The statement of President
Joseph F. Smith in 1904 is especially noteworthy in this regard:

I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and
if any officer or member of the church shall assume to solemnize
or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression
against the church, and will be liable to be . . . excommunicated
therefrom.²

This affirmation was reiterated in public and private by the
leaders of the Church for many years to come. "There isn't a man to-
day in this Church or anywhere else, outside of it, who has authority
to solemnize a plural marriage--not one!"³ asserted Joseph F. Smith in
1911; and this same all-inclusiveness was a characteristic of the
statements of his successor: "I want to say to the Latter-day Saints
that no man upon the face of the earth has any right or any authority
to perform a plural marriage, and there are no plural marriages today
in the Church of Christ, because no human being has the right to per-
form them. . . ."⁴ The argument that these public statements of the
Church leaders are not binding because the Church was committed to one
course in public and another in private is weakened by the Ivins ac-
count of a meeting of the Quorum of Twelve in 1911 wherein it was
decided that "in cases where plural marriages were entered into prior
to 1904 the parties to such marriages shouldn't be molested. . . ."⁵

¹Supra, p. 236.  ²Supra, p. 237.  ³Supra, pp. 245-46.
⁴Supra, p. 248.  ⁵Supra, p. 239.
This indicates that even in the private councils of the Church a
definite suspension of the practice of plural marriage was advocated.

It must be concluded upon reviewing the provisions for the
succession of authority from Joseph Smith, and the doctrine of plural
marriage, that authorization for the continued practice of the prin-
ciple by Latter-day Saints has universally and authoritatively ceased.¹

¹The "Fundamentalists" seek to implicate several members of the
Quorum of Twelve in their claims by quoting from the bitterly anti-
Mormon Salt Lake Tribune on October 10, 1910, which contained a long
list of persons allegedly involved in the practice of plural marriage
after the Manifesto. (See Musser, Law of Plural Marriage, pp. 6-7.)
They contend that, if Priesthood cannot function except by permission
of the Church, by what authority did these men receive plural wives
after the Manifesto? (A Priesthood Issue, p. 30.)

An incident in the life of John W. Taylor, one of those impli-
cated, indicates that although he was excommunicated from the Church,
any plural marriages he may have been involved in were not a corollary
of his membership in a high priesthood organization. Although recorded
in an historical novel written by his son, there is reason to believe
the incident is based upon fact.

It is stated that a man visited the John W. Taylor residence
following his excommunication from the Church, maintaining that the
Church did not have authority to regulate the practice of plural marriage.
The visitor's reasoning was the same as that proclaimed by present-day
"Fundamentalists." The conversation proceeded as follows:

"'You are still an Apostle, with all the powers of your priest-
hood,' the man said. 'When the Church repudiated the law of God by the
Manifesto, it forfeited its priesthood by betrayal. Since the Manifesto,
there has not been a single revelation by the Church authorities. The
Church no longer holds the priesthood. It could not handle you.'

"'You are splitting hairs,' Father said.

"'Not at all, Brother Taylor. What was it that was given the
Prophet Joseph? The Church? No. He was given the priesthood. He held
the priesthood several years before he formed a Church. He organized
the Church by the authority of his priesthood. The priesthood is entire-
ly independent of the Church organization. And we know, as Mormons,
that every other Church in the world except our own is without the auth-
ority of the priesthood. Now the official Mormon Church itself is in
the same situation, for it repudiated its priesthood by the Manifesto.
Since then, God has ceased to speak through Church authorities. Wilford
Woodruff spoke with the Lord before the Manifesto, but never since.
Joseph F. Smith has now been President a good many years, but he ad-
mitted in public testimony at Washington that he never had received a
message from the Lord.'

"The man paused. Father said nothing. The man smiled. 'Brother
In considering the assertion that the "irrevocable ordinance" in article III of the Utah Constitution "forever prohibiting" the practice of polygamy was the result of coercion by Congress and consequently was not binding upon the Latter-day Saints after statehood, the decision of the Utah Supreme Court in the case of the State v. Barlow is pertinent. When, in 1944, Albert E. Barlow and eleven others were convicted of unlawful cohabitation in the Third District Court at Salt Lake City, they appealed their case to the Supreme Court which rendered the following decision on the particular point being considered:

Taylor, the priesthood is held today only by those men set apart by your father to continue the Principle and by those who have not denied it. The Church has apostatized. It is our responsibility to call the people to the true faith, to restore to them the priesthood. We must labor with the Church and cause it to repent of its sins and return to the fold. As an apostle your mission is to join us in this labor. You have great power among the people. It is your duty to go among them preaching the true gospel. The people will rally to your banner. If the Church refuses to repent and ask forgiveness, it will be our duty to form another. The true Church must go on with you as its leader."

"Father arose. 'You have said entirely enough. Good night.'"

"But, Apostle Taylor. . . ."

"Father said firmly, 'My own difficulties with the authorities are strictly personal and private with me. If I was out of harmony, it was my own business and my own responsibility. Any adjustments will be made on the other side, not here. Every apostate claims the Church is wrong and he is right. The Church has disowned me, but I will never disown my Church. I will never join with any bitter group working for its downfall."

"You are repudiating the Principle!'"

"You're a fine one to talk!' Father roared. 'If my father received that revelation and set men apart to continue the Principle, it was as a secret mission for them. They were like espionage agents in wartime, pursuing a dangerous mission entirely at their own risk. You are betraying that mission by a public clamor against the Church itself! I haven't repudiated the Principle; you have! I will never repudiate the Principle, but I here and now repudiate all men who try to use it in an attack on the Church! Good night, sir!'"

"When the man had left, Mother said, 'You're all alone now, John.'"

"He smiled. 'No reason to run with bad company.'" (Samuel W. Taylor, Family Kingdom [New York: McGraw Hill, 1951], pp 273-302.)
Appellants' next contention that the provision against polygamy was incorporated into our State Constitution through duress and coercion of Congress and that in consequence thereof such provision was void ab initio, is untenable. Generally, the consequences of duress are voidable only, not void. As a rule, in a transaction requiring mutual consent, if consent is obtained by coercion, the victim may either affirm or avoid the transaction, but he may not claim the benefits and escape the obligations. In view of the fact that the Constitution was ratified as a whole, if appellants were to argue their contention to its logical conclusion they would have to claim that because of alleged duress as to one provision, the ratification of the Constitution was invalid, and that the basis for obtaining statehood never occurred. However, they do not and cannot challenge the validity of ratification a half century after it expired.

But assuming that the people of the state could, on the ground of coercion, avoid the 'irrevocable ordinance' only; that is the business of the people of the state and not of a faction or sect among them.1 And no attempt has been made to repeal the Constitutional provision forever prohibiting polygamy. Furthermore, the mere repeal of such Constitutional provision would not preclude the legislature from making polygamy a crime. . . .2

It is very doubtful that the Latter-day Saint Church leaders would have endorsed the State Constitution in 1894 with its "irrevocable ordinance" had they not been convinced that the practice of plural marriage had been discontinued by the same authority that introduced it. This is evident from the fact that when a similar ordinance was incorporated in the proposed state constitution in 1887, it did not have the sanction of the Church leaders—a factor that played a dominant role in defeating the bid for statehood that year.3 It will be remembered too, that although several favorable opportunities presented themselves prior to 1990, when a public announcement on the subject

1In citing the example of Coyle v. Smith wherein the people of Oklahoma were supported in revoking an "irrevocable ordinance" concerning the location of their state capitol (consult, supra, pp. 225-26.) the "Fundamentalists" fail to note that that action was a unanimous undertaking and not the doing of a faction or sect within the state.


3Consult, supra, pp. 134-35.
of plural marriage would have benefited the Saints, Mormons and non-Mormons alike were frequently assured from the pulpit and press that no move would be forthcoming in the matter except as commanded of the Lord.¹ This serves to illustrate the fallacy of the assertion that in 1890 the leaders of the Church adopted a policy of appeasement by which "it was tacitly understood" that the practice of plural marriage would be suspended and later reestablished following statehood.

Referring to the introduction, in 1901, of an amendment in the Utah legislature repealing the territorial "unlawful cohabitation" clause that had been incorporated into the State law by the Code Commission in 1896, as evidence that a policy of deception had been undertaken by the Church after the Manifesto and that "legislation" favorable to the reestablishment of the practice of polygamy was subsequently carried out contrary to the wording of the state constitution, the "Fundamentalists" once again apply a strained interpretation to events.²

In conclusion, if a prolific display of outdated quotations in support of polygamy, plus a unique interpretation of Church history, plus a frequent disparagement of the character and actions of the Church leaders, is evidence that the practice of plural marriage is still divinely sanctioned, then those who seek to disprove the statement of the Church that "there isn't a man today in this Church or anywhere else, outside of it, who has authority to solemnize a plural marriage," need look no further.

¹Supra, pp. 131-32. ²Consult, Supra, pp. 231-32.
CHAPTER XIV

CONCLUSION

Although nearly seventy years have passed since President Wilford Woodruff announced the suspension of the practice of plural marriage by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, groups of dissenters continue to claim authority to solemnize plural marriages. Faced with the prospects of excommunication, fine, imprisonment, and even the separation of children from parents, these advocates of polygamy are outspoken in the belief that "... since the law of ... plural marriage is a vital part of the religion of the Latter-day Saints, it is not within the legal power of the Government to prohibit it."¹ Consequently, efforts of State and Church authorities to cope with the problem have met with only limited success.

It has been with the question whether or not the practice of plural marriage is, in fact, still a vital part of the religion of the Latter-day Saints that this study has been concerned. Particular emphasis has been placed upon a comparison of the claims of the "Fundamentalists," as the advocates of polygamy are called, with the history and doctrine of the Latter-day Saint Church.

Believing the doctrine of plural marriage to have been commanded of the Lord, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

¹Musser, Celestial or Plural Marriage, p. 83.
advocated its practice for nearly a half century in the face of increasingly hostile sentiment. The first anti-polygamy legislation enacted in 1862 by the Congress of the United States was disregarded by the Latter-day Saints as an infraction upon the right of religious freedom guaranteed in the First Amendment to the Constitution. The question of the constitutionality of anti-polygamy legislation was settled, however, so far as the Government was concerned, by the decision of the United States Supreme Court in the case of George Reynolds in 1879 when it was decided that "... it is within the legitimate scope of the power of every civil government to determine whether polygamy or monogamy shall be the law of social life under its dominion."¹ Although this decision served as a benediction for more intensive anti-polygamy legislation to come, and although one tenet of their religion prescribed obedience to the laws of the land, the Latter-day Saints continued to practice the doctrine of plural marriage after 1879 on the ground that by obeying the laws of God they would "... not necessarily break the constitutional laws of the land."² From this precedent "Fundamentalists" today zealously contend that "... men are definitely commanded to keep God's laws in total disregard of the laws of man which might conflict therewith..."³

The crux of the matter, however, rests upon the issuance of the Manifesto by Wilford Woodruff on September 25, 1890. For if, as maintained by the Latter-day Saint Church, the Woodruff Manifesto discontinuing the practice of plural marriage was by the same authority as the

¹Supra, p. 117. ²Supra, pp. 119-20. ³Musser, loc. cit.
command of Joseph Smith that introduced it, then the "Fundamentalist" argument that polygamy is a command of God and should be obeyed at all costs is rendered innocuous.

"Fundamentalists" have, consequently, spared no efforts to nullify the Manifesto by attempting to show, that priesthood authority (including authority to solemnize plural marriages) has continued from Joseph Smith to the present day independent of the Latter-day Saint Church; that the practice of plural marriage is an irrevocable decree, essential to the highest exaltation in the world to come; and that the Manifesto was the result of a policy of appeasement by the Church, was dictated by non-Mormon federal officials, and was regarded as a "revelation" only as a matter of expediency.

A review of this position has shown, however, that only after a process of interpreting, amending, and fabricating Latter-day Saint Church history, can the case of the "Fundamentalists" be maintained.

It is evident from Latter-day Saint doctrine and history, that definite provisions were made by Joseph Smith for the succession of authority and from his day to the present there have been no provisions for the succession of authority independent of the Church; that the practice of plural marriage was not regarded as an irrevocable decree or essential to the highest exaltation irrespective of circumstances; and that the action of the Church in discontinuing the practice of plural marriage was accomplished by the same authority that introduced it.
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ABSTRACT

Since the issuance of the Manifesto by President Wilford Woodruff on September 25, 1890, discontinuing the practice of plural marriage by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, intensive efforts have been made by dissenters to show that authority to practice polygamy has secretly continued to the present day. Claiming that the Church departed from its original teachings when it discontinued the practice of plural marriage and that the Manifesto was adopted merely as an act of appeasement, "Fundamentalists" have attempted to show that the doctrine of plural marriage was revealed to the Latter-day Saints as an irrevocable decree, essential to the highest exaltation in the world to come. They further claim that since the time of Joseph Smith a special "higher priesthood" organization has secretly functioned independent of the Latter-day Saint Church through which authority to solemnize plural marriages has continued to the present day. Asserting that the practice of plural marriage is still a "vital part of the religion of the Latter-day Saints," and that men are commanded to obey God's laws "in total disregard of the laws of man which might conflict therewith," "Fundamentalists" conclude that it is not within the power of the Latter-day Saint Church or the Federal or State Government to prohibit plural marriages.

A consideration of this position indicates that only after a unique interpretation of certain carefully selected excerpts from Latter-day Saint Church history and in some instances a complete
fabrication of events, can evidence be found for the contention that the practice of plural marriage is still a "vital part of the religion of the Latter-day Saints."

On the other hand, a review of the history and doctrine of the Church indicates, that no provisions were made for a succession of authority from Joseph Smith independent of the present Latter-day Saint Church leadership; that the practice of plural marriage was not dogmatically regarded as an irrevocable decree or an essential to the highest exaltation regardless of circumstances; and that the suspension of the practice of plural marriage was accomplished by the same authority by which the practice was introduced.