

## Podcast 124: The Foolish and the Wise

**The following message was delivered by Denver Snuffer on September 27, 2020, in Sandy, Utah.**

-----

DENVER: I'm pretty thick-skinned when it comes to myself. I take a lot of criticism, and I don't... It doesn't bother me to have people say things that I know to be untrue. But there's a little different standard when it comes to the reputation of Joseph Smith—because there's a warning that is given about Joseph:

*The ends of the earth shall inquire after your [that is Joseph's] name, and fools shall have you in derision, and hell shall rage against you, while the pure in heart, and the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous shall seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under your hand. (T&C 139:7)*

That was a statement made by the Lord to Joseph to console him while he was in Liberty Jail. And the statement that “people that hold Joseph in derision are fools” rather changes the game in my view about how one should deal with Joseph Smith.

I put up with a lot as I read the *Joseph Smith Papers*—without comment, except in passing. But this particular podcast is intended to be a warning to the people that are involved with the *Joseph Smith Papers*, as well as Hales, who (in my view) have acted both foolishly and gone over the line. As I will explain in this current podcast, Joseph Smith has consigned you to hell/to damnation, as has also the Book of Mormon. So, I'm hoping that word of this will eventually trickle down to the people that are directly involved in the mischief that I'm gonna discuss today.

Volume 9 of the *Joseph Smith Papers* is attempting to set up a more bold approach in dealing with the subject of the Nauvoo adultery that was going on and to justify (as a religious proposition) that there is something legitimate to the idea of a man having more than one wife, and that that is not damnable, and it originated with Joseph Smith. A fair reading of the history (if you're trying to defend the reputation of Joseph Smith and if you regard the defense of Joseph Smith as something that is “wise” and “virtuous” and “noble,” as the Lord said to Joseph in Liberty Jail) suggests that you err on the side of caution when it comes to dealing with a dispensation head.

One of the first documents that I noted is a transcript of a discourse that Joseph Smith gave at the founding of the Relief Society on the 17th of March 1842 (on page 276), where the discussion begins with the “Historical Introduction.” And then the actual transcript of Joseph's comments begin on page 279.

See, the Relief Society was founded in part because of sexual improprieties (that had come to the attention of Joseph Smith) that was going on in Nauvoo. And so, the Relief Society was organized as a bulwark and a defense for the women in Nauvoo so that they could

stand on their own two feet. In fact, the document that represents the summary of Joseph's comments on that occasion suggests that Joseph turned the key on their behalf so that they had—independent of the men—authority to act in defense of their own righteousness and of their own virtue. The Relief Society was intended to be a bulwark to solidify and empower and liberate the women in order to have their own voice/their own right to stand up and defend the virtue of the members of their society and to protect them against the encroachment.

What I find interesting, and I'll just mention in passing: he says that it's "to assist; by correcting the morals and strengthening the virtues of the female community, and save the Elders the trouble of rebuking" (*Joseph Smith Papers: Documents, Volume 9, December 1841 to April 1842, pg. 280*). So, in this discourse, once Joseph finished with what he was doing to aid the women, when that part of the meeting ended, then the president spoke up. This is Emma Smith. "The Pres<sup>t</sup> [Emma] then suggested that she would like an argument with Elder Taylor on the words Relief and Benevolence" (*Ibid, pg. 282*). John Taylor had been in the meeting, and he had suggested that the name be the Nauvoo Female Benevolent Society, and Emma Smith wanted to argue that point. In other words, she (upon getting the men to shut up) stood up and said immediately, "The first thing I want to deal with is this **name.**" She was going to reject the name. "Pres<sup>t</sup> Emma Smith, said the popularity of the word benevolent is one great **objection**— no person can think of the word as associated with public Institutions, without thinking of the Washingtonian Benevolent Society which was one of the most corrupt Institutions of the day—do not wish to have it call'd after other societies in the world—" (*Ibid, emphasis added*). And so, Emma Smith demonstrates, when she's put in this position, she's absolutely no shrinking violet. She is not gonna take even the suggestion of the name for granted. She's gonna stand up, she's gonna defend the society, and she's gonna point out that if it associates it by word identification with something that is corrupt, then she's not in on it.

I've said this before: Of the two personalities, Emma Smith's was a stronger personality than Joseph Smith's was. Emma Smith was not likely to be cowed—as she is portrayed in Joseph taking other women and victimizing her and breaking her heart over these other women. There is no way that Emma Smith is the caricature that has been turned into that foolish nonsense.

"Counsellor Whitney mov'd, that..."—after some discussion... And Eliza Snow, she also contributed, and said "she felt to concur with the President, with regard to the word Benevolent, that many Societies with which it had been associated, were corrupt,—” (*Ibid, pg. 283*). And so then, after some discussion, "Whitney mov'd that [the] Society be call'd The Nauvoo Female Relief Society— [it was] secon<sup>d</sup> by Counsellor Cleveland—" (*Ibid*). And so, the name of the Relief Society was not what **the men** proposed that it be, but the name was what Emma Smith and Eliza Snow and Whitney and Cleveland wanted it—and so, the name, The Nauvoo Female Relief Society. Right there at the beginning of this process, it ought to be noted that not only did it have the desired effect of making the women have the power to stand up in their own right, but they **immediately** began to exercise that. They **immediately** begin to exercise it.

So then, things begin to progress, and on the 31st of March 1842 (the Relief Society having been organized on the 17th, as I recall—yeah, March 17th)... By the time you get a couple of weeks later, 31 March 1842, Joseph Smith wrote a letter to Emma Smith because the actions of John C. Bennett were beginning to tumble out into public discussion.

And so, the letter to Emma Smith of the Relief Society is “explained,” but the folks who are in charge of the *Joseph Smith Papers* produce and commend to the people that are reading the history a **version** of this letter that is **not** the same as the version that is committed into the record of the Female Relief Society. Instead, they take **another** copy that includes some language that is not in the Relief Society version, and they introduce the same sort of lie as the *Joseph Smith Papers* evidence/alteration of an introduction of lies elsewhere dealing with the subject of plural marriage. So, as their discussion of the Historical Introduction begins on page 304, they finally get (after a picture of Emma on page 307), “The letter to Emma Smith and the Relief Society appears to be an early response to the actions of Bennett and others who were seducing women in Nauvoo by misrepresenting the [and this is where they introduce their view, the] not yet publicly announced doctrine of plural marriage” (*Ibid*, pg. 307).

So, Joseph Smith is writing a letter to Emma Smith in order to guard against the misconduct of Bennett—and the commentary and the Historical Introduction by the people in charge of the *Joseph Smith Papers* cannot be left alone by saying, “This is what Joseph did early in response to John Bennett.’ They go on to say, “the not yet publicly [introduced].” If you’re being **fair** and you want to say **when** it was publicly introduced, I can tell you when it was: It was done in a General Conference of the LDS Church in Salt Lake Valley, some eight years after the **death** of Joseph Smith and **not** when Joseph was alive. Why isn’t that footnoted? Why aren’t you telling the truth about that? There is no evidence that Joseph intended for this practice to **ever** be made public, **even if** you think it originated with him. It’s a damned lie to attribute this as though it were something Joseph intended to be made public.

Then (on that same page 307), they say, “The featured text is the earliest extant version of the letter and **may have...**” (*Ibid*). No, it’s not the earliest extant. The earliest extant copy was what was put into the Relief Society minutes, hand-copied by Eliza R. Snow, who was the secretary for the Relief Society. But they say this version of the letter “...may have been either an early draft of the letter **or** the actual correspondence delivered to Emma Smith and the Relief Society. Sometime after September 1842, Relief Society secretary Eliza R. Snow copied the letter into the organization’s minute book, including...**one significant omission**” (*Ibid*, pgs. 307-308, emphasis added). One significant omission. You can read the letter and the version that was hand-copied by Eliza R. Snow into the Relief Society minutes, and you will conclude that Joseph Smith utterly rejects plural wifery/spiritual wifery/polygamy and condemns anyone who could advocate it.

The only **exception** to that is the **insertion** into this letter of something that is **omitted** from the version of the letter that Eliza R. Snow copied into the minutes of the Relief Society. I’ll read you starting a little bit before that:

...we therefore warn you & forewarn you in the name of the Lord to check and destroy any faith that any innocent person may have in any such character for we don't want any body to believe any thing as coming from us contrary to the old established morals & virtues & scriptural laws regulating the habits customs & conduct of Society **unless** it be by message del[iv]ered to you by our own mouth, by actual revelation & commandment. (*Ibid*, pg. 309, emphasis added)

The words I just concluded with, "unless it be by message del[iv]ered to you by our own mouth, by actual revelation & commandment," **is not in** the Relief Society minutes recording the version of the letter that Joseph Smith sent to Emma Smith. But what is in the letter:

Can the "Female Relief [sic] Society of Nauvoo" be Trusted with some important matter that ought actually...belong to them to see to which men have been under the necessity of seeing to to their chagrin and Mortification in order to prevent iniquitous characters from carrying their iniquity into effect such as, for instance a man who may be aspiring after power & authority and yet without principle; regardles[s] of god, man or the Devil or the interest or welfare of men, or the virtue o[f] innocence of women? Shall the credulity, good faith, & steadfast feelings of our Sisters for the cause of God or truth be imposed upon by believing such men because they say they have authority from Joseph or [from] the first Presidency or any other Presidency of the church and thus with a lie in their mouth deceive & debauch the innocent under the assumption that they are authorized from these sources! May God forbid!

...no such authority ever has, ever can, or ever will be given to any man & if any man has been guilty of any such thing let him be treated with utter contempt & let the curse of God fall on his head, & let him be turned out of Society as unworthy of a place among men, ...denounced as the blackest & most unprincipled wretch & finally let him be damned. (*Ibid*, pg. 308)

Those are the words that precede.

...we therefore warn you & forewarn you in the name of the Lord to check and destroy any faith that any innocent person may have in any such character for we don't want any body to believe any thing as coming from us contrary to the old established morals & virtues & scriptural laws regulating the [habits and conduct] habits customs & conduct of Society. ...all persons pretending to be authorized by us or having any permit or sanction from us...will be liars and base imposters. ...you are authorized on the very first intimation of the kind to denounce them as such...<shun> them as the fiery flying serpents, whether they are prophets, seers, or Revelators, patriarchs, Twelve apostles, Elders, Priests...Mayors, Generals...city council alderman, Marshall, Police, Lord Mayor or the Devil, are alike culpable. & shall be damned for such evil practices.

...we want to put a stop to them, & we want you to do your part & we will do ours.

May [the Lord] God add his blessings upon your head & lead you in all the paths of virtue piety and peace.... (*Ibid*, pg. 309)

This is what Joseph Smith wrote as his initial reaction to the misconduct that he was hearing about John C. Bennett, damning them to hell.

Joseph Smith gave another discourse on the 8th of April 1842 at a conference. It would... The minutes were published in the *Times and Seasons*. In this, while he's talking generally about the subject of the temple baptism for the dead and that they were discontinuing baptisms until the temple was finished, in this same talk, reading from the minutes on page 344:

He then spoke in contradiction of a report in circulation about Elder Kimball, B. Young [Brigham Young], himself, and others of the Twelve, alleging that a sister had been shut in a room for several days, and that they had endeavored to induce her to believe in having two wives. Also cautioned the sisters against going to the steam boats.

Pres't. [Joseph Smith] J. Smith spoke upon the subject of the stories respecting Elder Kimball and others, showing the folly and inconsistency of spending any time in conversing about such stories or hearkening to them, for there is no person that is acquainted with our principles [who] would believe such lies, except [Thomas] Sharp the editor of the "Warsaw Signal." (*Ibid*, pg. 344)

And so, Joseph Smith, in a **public** discourse—because this problem is growing in its magnitude, and Joseph Smith is denouncing the practice, not just in letters to the Relief Society but now going forward to denounce them publicly in a conference.

Then on the 10th of April 1842, Joseph Smith gives a discourse that I'm gonna read from:

If you wish to go whare God is you must be like God or possess the principles which God possesses for if we are not drawing towards God in principle we are going from him & drawing towards the devil...I am standing in the midst of all kinds of people search your hearts & see if **you** are like God, [I've] searched mine & feel to repent of all my sins, We have thieves among us Adulterers, liars, hypocritts, if God could speak from heaven he would command ~~us~~...not to steal, not to commit Adultery, nor to covet, nor **deceive** but be faithful over a few things As far as we degenerate from God we desend to the devil & [lose] knowledge '& without Knowledge we cannot be saved...while our hearts are filled with evil...we are studying evil their is no room in our hearts for good or studying good...the Church must be cleansed & I proclaim against all iniquity. A man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge for if he does not get knowledge he will be brought into Captivity by some evil power in the other world as evil spirits will have more knowled[g]e & consequently more power than many men who are on the earth. hence it needs Revelation to assist us & give us knowledge of the things of God. (*Ibid*, pgs.351-352, emphasis added)

Revelation from God reveals their wickedness and abominations. We hear the language quoted about how “a man is saved no faster than he gets knowledge” divorced from what he’s really talking about **all the time**. What he’s talking about is the descent (in Nauvoo) of the people that he’s addressing into wickedness, abominations, adultery, covetousness, stealing—and therefore, “drawing [near] the devil,” as opposed to practicing virtue and drawing near to God.

Joseph Smith, then addressed again (on the 28th of April of 1842) the Relief Society, again, in which he said that women of faith... This is a remarkable discourse to the Relief Society, saying women of faith can heal, and there’s nothing wrong with them laying hands on and healing the sick—because that is an attribute and a gift that comes as a consequence of possessing **faith** and not necessarily **limited to** people who have priesthood.

But on page 404 at the very bottom, the summary from this discourse lists one attribute, gift, or power of women that’s tied directly to virtue. And he says this: “...females, if they are pure and innocent can come into the presence of God” (*Ibid*, pg. 404). Females can come into the presence of God; it’s a question that I’ve had to answer a number of times in emails and private conversations. Joseph answers it here, the caveat being ‘purity and innocence before God.’

Well, this then brings me to the most contemptible part of the entire Volume 9 of the Documents in the *Joseph Smith Papers*, which has been the subject of countless citations as evidence of Joseph Smith’s secret, private, dishonest, culpable practice of the plural wife thing—and he got caught because of **this** evidence. It’s a letter that doesn’t belong at all in the *Joseph Smith Papers* project. They have the gall to insert it in the *Papers* (as an appendix)—“Appendix: Letter to Nancy Rigdon, Mid-April 1842.” It’s the Nancy Rigdon letter that is pointed to by **everyone** as proof positive that Joseph Smith engaged in the secret practice of seducing women.

Now, I want you to think about this for a moment in the context of history at the time. The Warsaw newspaper that Thomas Sharp is editing is claiming that Joseph Smith is engaged in this private, secret, licentious, adulterous practice. And Joseph Smith is saying, ‘Anyone that propound this doctrine is damned to hell. It’s a lie.’ Thomas Sharp is saying, ‘No, no, it’s really going on over there in Nauvoo.’ Joseph Smith is doing everything he can to try and locate those that are involved in this practice, and when he finds someone, he hails them before the High Council of Nauvoo.

And in the midst of this, we are supposed to believe that the husband of **Emma Smith** (who has the backbone to stand up to the men and tell John Taylor, ‘I’ve got an argument with you’ as soon as she has the opportunity to speak as the Relief Society President) is going to be weeping, oh so delicately in her home, while she knows... (but she’ll lie about it later, you see), she knows her husband’s out seducing other women. And this nonsense is supposed to be believed when Joseph Smith (publicly and in private correspondence) is doing everything he can to detect this and to put it away and to denounce it and to call it not only a damnable lie but to consign everyone who’s involved in this activity—whether they are apostles or prophets or seers or revelators—they are consigned by Joseph Smith

to hell (which, because Joseph Smith was a dispensation head, is just as valid and binding today as it was when Joseph penned those words in 1842). And so, if you are someone who, today, are likewise advancing this lie against Joseph Smith, in the words of a dispensation head, you have been consigned to hell (which is perfectly consistent with other statements that are made in Scripture). We'll get to those in a moment.

But here we have the Appendix, in which those people responsible for the *Joseph Smith Papers* insert the letter to Nancy Rigdon in mid-April 1842-ish. (They can't put a date on it. And there's a reason for that. They'll explain it.) So, here's the first sentence. No, no this is the beginning of the second sentence of the Historical Introduction. "Because J[oseph] S[mith]'s authorship of this letter is uncertain, the letter is presented [in] an appendix to this volume rather than a featured document" (*Ibid*, Appendix, pg. 413).

If Joseph Smith's authorship of this letter is uncertain, why the hell is it in this document at all? If someone wrote a contemporaneous letter denouncing, as an adulterer and a liar, someone today, should that find its way into the authorized biography of that man? I have read scandalous accusations involving President Russell M. Nelson. But there's no appendix to the biography that was written of **that** man, in which those scandalous accusations are added to the record—because, well, there's no proof of it. But it's considered part of the record of the history of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the dispensation head?

This is how we're going to treat the man who wrote, 'Anyone who would engage in this is damned to hell'? This is how we're going to deal with his memory? This is how we're gonna deal with his legacy? We're gonna say, 'Although there's no evidence Joseph wrote this, we're gonna include it in the appendix.' Because we certainly don't want to allow Joseph's character to not be besmirched with what he was fighting against—because it will be picked up and championed by Brigham Young! Just because it makes Brigham Young a liar, that is no reason to drag Joseph Smith into the very practice that he denounced as false, adulterous, wicked, and 'damning one to hell.' You don't improve the reputation of Brigham Young by besmirching the character of Joseph Smith! And yet, the people responsible for the *Joseph Smith Papers* are doing exactly that.

So, they then say, "Bennett..." This is John C. Bennett:

Bennett launched a vitriolic campaign to disparage J[oseph] S[mith], which included sending the series of letters to the *[Sangamo] Journal*. In the second of these communications, dated 2 July, Bennett claimed to have intimate knowledge of J[oseph] S[mith]'s attempts to court Nancy Rigdon as a plural wife—a marital system [which] Bennett referred to as "spiritual wifery"—and described a letter that J[oseph] S[mith] purportedly wrote to Rigdon to explain the doctrine and justify the proposal. (*Ibid*)

The source of this information is John C. Bennett. Period. This letter appears in *Sangamo Journal*. It was produced by Bennett as evidence of what Joseph Smith was doing.

Bennett further reported that the letter was in the hands of Rigdon's friends, and that both he and Rigdon's father, Sidney, had read it. (*Ibid*, pgs. 413-414)

So, Bennett doesn't have the letter. He's giving you a transcript of the letter. He's saying that the letter is in the hands of friends of Rigdon's, and that Sidney had read the letter too. All of that could be true without the letter having ever originated with Joseph Smith.

Because contemporaneous evidence discredits other allegations in Bennett's *Sangamo Journal* letters—and in his subsequent book, *History of the Saints: or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*, which appeared in early 1842—some debate exists among historians about the authenticity of this purported J[oseph] S[mith] letter. As in the cases of most of his verifiable plural marriages...

And there are none; the verification of that came decades following the death of Joseph Smith, during a lawsuit in which evidence needed to be ginned up. There's nothing contemporaneous.

...J[oseph] S[mith] was silent about this issue—neither confirming nor denying either his authorship of the letter or the allegation that he approached Nancy Rigdon to be a plural wife.

That statement is belied by the very next sentence:

J[oseph] S[mith]'s brother William Smith, editor of the Nauvoo newspaper *Wasp*, denied that J[oseph] S[mith] was the letter's author. (*Ibid*)

Are you telling me that Joseph Smith's brother (who's writing the letter and in contact with his brother) saying that Joseph Smith denies that he's the author of the letter, doesn't constitute a denial of the letter? So, let's get this right. If someone says a hundred falsehoods about you and you've categorically denied all of them and you've only taken the trouble to deny eighty of the hundred, can we say because you didn't deny the eighty-first, that therefore, we can impute that you didn't deny it, when you've been categorical about denying in public and in writing? How foolish is it to assume that the same man that would have written (not long before this, in a preceding month) that it's 'a damnable lie for anyone to advance this, whether they be a president, a prophet, a seer, a revelator, an apostle, a patriarch—it's a damned lie; don't believe it, no matter who the damn thing comes from' to then turn around and to write **this** letter at the very time that he's trying to put this mess behind him?

Just ask yourself how credible that seems to you. So, let me reread those last two sentences:

J[oseph] S[mith] was silent about this issue—neither confirming nor denying either his authorship of the letter or the allegation that he approached Nancy Rigdon to be a plural wife. J[oseph] S[mith]'s brother William Smith, editor of the Nauvoo newspaper *Wasp*, denied that J[oseph] S[mith] was the letter's author. In September



the *Wasp* also printed a statement above **Sidney Rigdon's** signature claiming that, "Mr. Smith denied to me the authorship of that letter." (*Ibid*, emphasis added)

So, the editors of the *Joseph Smith Papers* say that:

- Joseph Smith did not deny authorship,
- followed by Sidney Rigdon saying he'd spoken with Joseph Smith, and Joseph Smith denied authorship of the letter.

The circuitous nature of the pretzel the authors of the *Joseph Smith Papers* twist themselves into in order to perpetuate support for Joseph Smith's lying/adultery/hypocrisy should put them all to shame! This stuff is publishing a lie! This stuff is damnable, wrong, immoral, corrupt, offensive—it is holding Joseph Smith in derision! It is something only a fool would do.

Rigdon cryptically reported that his daughter Nancy declared that "she never said to Gen. Bennett or any other person, that said letter was written by said Mr. Smith, nor in his handwriting, but by another person, and in another person's handwriting." (*Ibid*)

These are the historical background materials that the *Joseph Smith Papers* authors are willing to concede about this nonsense that they're about to publish in the Appendix and attribute to Joseph Smith.

Although this particular letter's authenticity is contested.... (*Ibid*)

...and then they go on from there. If it's contested... If Rigdon denied it... Sidney Rigdon denied it. Nancy Rigdon denied it. Joseph Smith's brother denied it. Yet, the Nancy Rigdon letter has become one of the **great supporting proofs** of Joseph Smith's culpability in lying/ dissembling/hypocrisy/dishonesty.

If the text was derived from an authentic letter or...copy thereof in Bennett's possession, neither the original letter nor an early manuscript copy has been located. (*Ibid*)

Then I ask you: What the hell is it doing in this book? Why? Why rely upon the *Sangamo Journal* and letters published there from John Bennett, when you admit that John Bennett is such a dubious, dishonest source that other of his letters won't be given any credence whatsoever? Then they acknowledge,

...none of the 1842 printed versions or later handwritten copies based on them include a signature, address, or date. (*Ibid*)

That's why at the beginning of this, when the Appendix starts out, it says it's mid-April 1842-ish. Because there's no signature; there's no address; and there's no date.

And then, just before beginning a transcript of the document that they put in the *Papers* to honor Joseph Smith's memory, they include this statement:

Though his letter to the *Sangamo Journal* did not include any provenance information or explicit physical description, when Bennett included the letter in [the] *History of the Saints* he stated that the original was in Willard Richards's handwriting and that he obtained it from church member Francis M. Higbee. (*Ibid*, pg. 416)

(Keep that name in mind because we'll get around to that.) So, we don't have any provenance information. We don't have any physical description. And yet, there we have this nonsense.

Well, not only is John C. Bennett's letters to the *Sangamo Journal* and his subsequent *History of the Saints* unreliable, when he was exposed and he was excommunicated, he was brought before the Nauvoo High Council and the city leaders and the civic leaders in Nauvoo. And Daniel Wells was an Alderman in the city of Nauvoo; he was someone before whom oaths could be made. And John Bennett swore out an affidavit under oath in the presence of Alderman Daniel H. Wells, which was published in the *Times and Seasons* contemporaneous with John Bennett's exposure. Now, John Bennett will **later** write the letter that he wrote to the *Sangamo Journal*, but **before** he did that and near contemporaneous with his excommunication, he swore this affidavit:

Personally appeared before me, Daniel H. Wells, an Alderman of said city of Nauvoo, John C. Bennett, who being duly sworn according to law, deposeth and saith: that he never was taught any thing in the least cantrary [sic] to the strictest principles of the Gospel, or of virtue, or of the laws of God, or man, under [any circumstances or upon] any occasion either directly or indirectly, in word or deed, by Joseph Smith; and that he never knew the said Smith to countenance any improper conduct what[so]ever, either in public or private; and that he never did teach to me in private that an illegal illicit intercourse with females was, under any circumstances, justifiable, and that I never knew him so to teach others. JOHN C. BENNETT. (*Times and Seasons*, 1 August 1842, vol. 3, no.19, p. 871)

Now, his letters to the *Sangamo Journal* are not under oath. But this declaration is under oath with the penalty of perjury. John Bennett testified before the High Council. This is a summary (also printed in the *Times and Seasons*) of what happened as he testified in front of the city council:

Dr. John C. Bennett, ex-Mayor, was then called upon by the Mayor...

"Mayor" being Joseph Smith because Joseph had been appointed before the next election to serve as the Mayor, in the interim, in order to make sure that they didn't have someone equally immoral/equally scandalous/equally untrustworthy running the city. And so, they relied upon the virtue and the integrity of Joseph Smith to be the replacement Mayor once John Bennett had resigned.

Bennett...was then called upon by the Mayor to state if he knew aught [anything] against him [Joseph Smith]; when...Bennett replied: I know what I am about, and the heads of the church know what they are about, I expect. I have no difficulty with the heads of the church [sic]. I publicly avow that anyone who has said that I have stated that General Joseph Smith has given me authority to hold illicit intercourse with women, [sic] a liar in the face of God, those who have said it are damned liars; they are infernal liars. He never, either in public or private, gave me any such authority or license, and any person who states it is a scoundrel and a liar. (*Ibid*, p. 872)

Which means that John Bennett is now declaring in front of the city council what he intends to become—because he will later say the opposite of this; he is a liar, a damned liar, an infernal liar, a scoundrel, and a liar.

I have heard it said that I should become a second Avarad by withdrawing from the church, and that I was at variance with the heads and should [see] an influence against them because I resigned the office of Mayor; this is false. (*Ibid*)

During the difficulties in Missouri, Sampson Avarad led a group that he called the Danites into a reign of terrorism and retaliation, which (when it later became the subject of public notice) Avarad switched sides and said that it was Joseph Smith (who had, by the way, fired and reduced him—changed him from being in command to being, I think, the cook for the group) Joseph Smith denounced/denied. Well, Avarad then switched and attributed to Joseph Smith all of his (Sampson Avarad's) misconduct. And they were saying, 'Oh, you're gonna follow that same pattern.'

Now, sure enough, John Bennett will follow that same pattern. But at this point on this date, while he's still trying to redeem his reputation and remain a member in good standing of the community at least (someone that could repent and come back), he says, That attribution that he intends to become another Sampson Avarad is false.

I have no difficulty with the heads of the church, and I intend to continue with you, and hope the time may come when I may be restored to full confidence, and fellowship, and my former standing in the church; and that my conduct may be such as to warrant my restoration—and should the time ever come that I may have the opportunity to test my faith it will then be known whether I am a traitor or a true man.

Joseph Smith [acting Mayor] then [said]: "Will you please state definitely [sic] whether you know **anything** against **my character** either in public or private.["] Gen. Bennett answered: "I do not; in all my intercourse with Gen. Smith, in public and in private, he has been strictly virtuous." (*Ibid*, emphasis added)

Well, time moves on. One of the names that I read to you earlier was Higbee. Higbee will also weigh in on this mess. Higbee will then change sides, and he'll be part of the *Nauvoo Expositor*. But earlier in this debacle, in—this is the very end of 1842—Francis Higbee says,

I received your letter to-day, under the date of Nov. 13th which contained astonishing news to me indeed; and equally as painful as strange, and that [it] is the fact [that] of Bennett's book containing two letters from me. (*Times and Seasons*, vol. 4, "Extract of a Letter from F. M. Higbee, Nauvoo, Dec. 25th 1842")

This is Francis Higbee saying. So, the letter or the book/the exposé (that John Bennett did) included two letters of Francis Higbee. He's saying this is astonishing.

...as such a thing has no foundation in truth. He has not got a scratch on earth, no[t] [ever] did he have, with my name subscribed by my own hand, except the affidavit that fell into his hands. ...And if he has published anything over my signature, or name, it is forged. (*Ibid*)

This is Francis Higbee talking about the man. Francis Higbee then says,

Bennett has been the instigator probably of more real trouble and misery than any other man we have ever met with, or [shall ever] find in this world. (*Ibid*)

Well...

There's a principle; it's a true principle. I don't know how many people are aware of it, but there's a great difference between receiving a revelation and being a prophet. Revelations are most often for the benefit of the individual and his family—and do not make the recipient a prophet. A **prophet** must be given a message from God to deliver to the world. This rarely happens. When it does, the message must be unadulterated and convey God's message and not the messengers.

But it is a far different thing for a man to stand at the head of a dispensation. He's brought into the Heavenly Council and stands as a member of that council, although but a man on Earth. The breadth, depth, and extent of a dispensation head is so much greater than that of a prophet, that any true prophet would show respect and **defer to** the dispensation head, as a child would respect his father. If you can understand that principle and comprehend it, you'll see how it is played out in all of the prior Scriptures.

Moses lamented (and this is in the book of Numbers)...

*Joshua the son of Nun, [a] servant of Moses, one of his young men, answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them [because Eldad and Medad had been prophesying in the camp]. And Moses said unto him, Do you envy for my sake? Would to God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that [God] would put his spirit upon them (Numbers 7:19 RE).*

Because Moses knew that if that Spirit had been put upon them, that they would reinforce and testify to the truthfulness of the message that the dispensation head had been delivering. Because prophets support the dispensation head.

The Apostle Paul said that *a dispensation of the gospel is committed unto me* (in First Corinthians, paragraph 36 in the Restoration Scriptures). He would go on to explain: *If any man think himself to be a prophet or spiritual, let him acknowledge that the things that I write unto you are the commandments of the Lord* (1 Corinthians 1:60 RE). In other words, he's saying, 'If you're really a prophet, then you're going to defer to, support, and testify that the dispensation head has given you the Word of God.'

Well, which leads us then to the next problem that we've got with the *Joseph Smith Papers*. Joseph Smith made clear what his position was. He said anyone that advances this nonsense is a liar, is damnable, and is seeking to consign themselves to hell, which is exactly what we read in the Book of Mormon. Nephi writing said, *Woe unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell* (2 Nephi 6:10 RE).

The message of the Book of Mormon **condemns** those who advance a lie about Joseph Smith, particularly when that lie is something that Joseph testified would result in their damnation. And yet, people feel at absolute liberty to consign Joseph to being a hypocrite and a liar. And they describe his wife as though she were someone so weak/so vulnerable/so easily put upon that she, knowing this stuff, would do nothing about it. This is the same Emma Smith who would testify forthrightly and consistently that her husband never had another wife other than her.

In the revelation that was given to Joseph and Sidney Rigdon (that used to be in the Doctrine and Covenants 76, but which is now included within the Teachings and Commandments as 69), this is talking about the people who are damned. *Last of all, these... are they who will not be gathered with the saints, to be caught up unto the church of the Firstborn and received into the cloud. These are they who are liars* (T&C 69:27), and he goes on to describe other attributes.

If you're lying about the Prophet Joseph Smith, if you're turning him into a hypocrite, if you're among the *fools [who hold Joseph] in derision* and you are not among *the pure in heart, ...the wise, and the noble, and the virtuous [who] seek counsel, and authority, and blessings constantly from under [Joseph Smith's] hand* (T&C 139:7), then you are among those who are liars. It says these are they who love and make a lie. *...Whosoever loveth and maketh a lie. These are they who suffer the wrath of God on the earth. These are they who suffer the vengeance of Eternal fire* (T&C 69:27). I would suggest that a fair reading of the Scriptures and a fair regard for the reputation of Joseph Smith—as someone who is likewise noble and virtuous and someone whose counsel ought to be sought—suggests that we ought to be a whole lot more careful than those people responsible for preparing the *Joseph Smith Papers* are in guarding the virtue, the reputation, the integrity, the honesty of Joseph Smith and **defending him** against the charges of hypocrisy, instead of attempting to put **into** the official record of Joseph Smith—in order to redeem Brigham Young; in order to redeem John Taylor; in order to redeem Wilford Woodruff; in order to redeem every polygamist leader of the Church, through and including Heber J. Grant, who practiced this adulterous relationship as though it were a sacrament—you should not attempt to vindicate them by besmirching the character of Joseph Smith and attributing to him

dishonesty, a lack of integrity, hypocrisy, and (by his own words) someone worthy of the damnation of hell.

It comes down to this: Either Joseph Smith is a damnable liar who ought to go to hell (and if so, then such a contemptible man ought not have founded a church in the first place, and the whole of this ought to be abandoned), **or** he was a prophet; he was a dispensation head; he was someone to whom deference is owed; he is someone that ought to be defended; and the things he taught publicly and wrote in letters to the Relief Society (without their alteration) should be respected and adhered to and upheld.

I am of the view that—after having looked at as much of the historical record as is made public—I am of the view that all of those who attribute to Joseph Smith this practice (that he fought against) are all liars (by the definition that Joseph Smith established, by the definition sworn to by John Bennett under oath).

His subsequent letters were not under oath. His book was not under oath. But his testimony defending Joseph Smith was under oath—both the affidavit that he swore to in front of Daniel Wells, as well as the testimony he gave before ~~the Nauvoo High Council~~ the Nauvoo City Council. Both of those statements were made by him under oath.

And Joseph Smith **did** deny the Nancy Rigdon letter. He denied it, and his brother William said he did so in the publication he made in *The Wasp* in Nauvoo. And Sidney Rigdon denied it, after having talked to Joseph. And so, it is a **lie** to say that Joseph never denounced the letter or refuted it.

The people responsible for putting this together are engaged in a most serious undertaking. Their salvation is dependent upon the absence of deliberate lies from the record involving Joseph Smith. And I can tell you in the name of Israel's God, that what Joseph Smith penned as a warning (in the 1842 timeframe) will stand as a witness against all those liars in the Day of Judgment. And they will have to account for how they dealt with the reputation of that man, because he stood at the head of a dispensation. And if you think you are a prophet, then you better stand up and defend—just as Moses had no problem with prophets being in the camp of Israel, knowing that they would support him; just as Paul said, 'If anyone's a prophet, then let them say that what I write comes from God.'

You need to repent. You need to undo the mischief that you have done. And if you fail to do so, you do that at the peril of your own salvation. And the day will come in which you will stand before the bar of God, and you will be among those who *loveth and maketh a lie*. You will be among those who are liars that are *thrust down to hell*. And that is just as true of those who have written biographies about Joseph Smith. If they're still living, they need to undo the mischief. They need to correct the record. They need to defend the reputation of a dispensation head called by God.

And I say this in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.