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## HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

JUNE, 1844.

The following letters were also written:

"Nauvoo, June 14th, 1844.

"To His Excellency Gov. Ford:

"Sir:—Though I have not the honor of a personal acquaintance with you, I take the liberty of stating to you, that I arrived here from the city of New York about a year since, where I was engaged in the practice of medicine for many years, that Gen. Smith's letter to you of this date has been read in my hearing, that the statements contained therein, in relation to the proceedings of the municipal authorities for the removal of the press whence issued a scandalous sheet entitled the 'Nauvoo Expositor,' are correct, having been an eye and ear witness of them.

The whole affair was conducted by the city marshal and his posse in the most quiet and orderly manner, without the least noise, riot, or tumult; and when the nuisance was abated they immediately retired and were dismissed.

Having been a boarder in Gen. Smith's family for more than nine months, and having therefore had abundant opportunities of contemplating his character, and observing his conduct, I have concluding to give you a few of my impressions of him.

Gen. Joseph Smith is naturally a man of strong mental powers, and is possessed of much energy and decision of character, great penetration, and a profound knowledge of human nature. He is a man of calm judgment, enlarged views, and is eminently distinguished by his love of justice. He is kind and obliging, generous and benevolent, sociable and cheerful, and is possessed of a mind of a contemplative and reflective character; he is honest, frank, fearless, and independent, and as free from dissimulation as any man to be found.

But it is in the gentle charities of domestic life, as the tender and affectionate husband and parent, the warm and sympathizing friend, that the prominent traits of his character are revealed, and his heart is felt to be keenly alive to the kindest and softest emotions of which human nature is susceptible, and I feel assured that his family and friends formed one of the greatest consolations to him, while the vials of wrath were poured upon his head, while his footsteps were pursued by malice and envy, and reproach and slander were strewn in his path, as well as during numerous and cruel persecutions, and severe and protracted sufferings in chains and loathsome prisons, for worshipping God according to the dictates of his own conscience.

He is a true lover of his country, and a bright and shining example of integrity and moral excellence in all the relations of life. As a religious teacher as well as a man he is greatly beloved by this people. It is almost superfluous to add that the numerous ridiculous and scandalous reports in circulation respecting him, have not the least foundation in truth.

In haste, I have the honor to be your Excellency's, most obedient and humble servant,

JOHN M. BERNHISEL."

"City of Nauvoo, June 14th, 1844.

"Honorable Gov. Thomas Ford:

"Being a stranger in the city of Nauvoo, but fully acquainted with the facts as stated in Gen. Smith's letter of June 14th, I assert that they are true in every particular, and that the press in the minds of all unprejudiced people was a nuisance of the worst character, and that the authorities acted perfectly proper in destroying it; and in accomplishing the act there was no noise, tumult, or riot. Furthermore, having remained for a few weeks at Gen. Smith's house, I think it my duty to state that I have seen nothing in his deportment, but what is correct in all his domestic relations, being a kind husband and an affectionate father, and all his affairs both domestic and official have not only been free from censure but praiseworthy, and ought to be imitated by every one desirous of good order and peace.—Yours, sir, most obediently.

J. R. WAKEFIELD, M.D."

"Post Office, Nauvoo, Ill.,

June 14th, 1844.

"His Excellency Thomas Ford:

"Dear Sir:—I address this letter to your Excellency by the hand of Mr. S. James, in consequence of the difficulties now existing in this county, difficulties in which I have had no concern, and fearing as I do that in the midst of an excitement so great as I have understood now exists in this county—I say understood, for it is by report only that I can speak—there may be attempts made to prejudice your mind to take some measures of a violent character that may seriously affect the citizens of this place, and injure innocent and unoffending persons, which I am satisfied would grieve your

Excellency, as well as every other thinking and humane man.

There have for a length of time difficulties existed between a number of the citizens of this place, which kept increasing; one of the parties had recourse to the Warsaw Signal as a medium through which they communicate their difficulties to the world. Those productions were inflammatory to a high degree, and the party thus assailed charged the matter as libelous and highly abusive; to these exposures responses appeared in the papers of this place, charging the matter as being false and the authors as defamers and slanderers.

Things continued thus until a paper was established in this place called the Nauvoo Expositor. The first number of this paper made its appearance, and it was inflammatory and abusive to an extreme. This raised the excitement to a degree beyond control, and threatened serious consequences.

At this particular juncture, all the authorities of the city feeling a common interest in the peace and quiet of the place, and fearing the worst consequences must follow if something were not done, the city council met and took the matter into consideration, and after deliberating on the subject and examining the charter, came to the conclusion to hazard all the consequences of declaring the press a nuisance, and accordingly ordered its removal. The city marshal, in obedience to this order, went and removed the press and destroyed it. This was done without tumult or disorder; when the press was destroyed, all returned home; and everything has been perfectly quiet ever since.

Within the last three days warrants have been issued from a justice of the peace in Carthage, calling for the bodies of the persons who destroyed the press. The officer having the matter in charge refuses the persons a hearing before any other justice of the peace than the one issuing the warrants; with this demand they refused to comply, as there is a large assembly of persons assembled at Carthage making threats of violence; and they say, and I have no doubt verily believe, that by going there their lives will be in danger, and from the intelligence which I received last evening from a person no way connected with the affair, and one of undoubted veracity, I must think so myself. This gentleman informs me that he has been in Carthage since Monday last at the land sales, and he heard threatenings by the persons assembled there, that if they could get into Nauvoo that they would murder indiscriminately, and those who wanted to escape must leave. This your Excellency will abhor as I do.

The citizens of this county who do not reside in Nauvoo, and those of other counties, have indeed no interest of a personal kind at stake in this matter; there are no persons disturbing them nor a going to do so, and this great excitement does savor of something else to me than a regard for the laws. Why not let the parties, as in all other cases of the kind, settle their difficulties as the laws of the country in such cases have provided.

Have the citizens of Nauvoo ever interfered with cases of difficulty existing in other parts of the county, held public meetings to inflame the public mind in favor of one party, and prejudice it against the other party? Most assuredly they have not; why then must the citizens of this place be scourged with such attempts?

If the citizens of Hancock want the supremacy of the laws maintained, let these tumultuous assemblies disperse, and let the civil officers, if resisted, do as in other cases, call for aid instead of assembling in advance, and then call for persons to be brought into their midst as prisoners amidst threats and insults.

From the confidence I have in your Excellency's superior intelligence and sound discretion, I doubt not but your Excellency will arrive at just conclusions when the matter is submitted to your consideration, as I understand it is about being.

I can see no need for executive interference in this case, but disperse all uncalled for assemblies, and let the laws have their regular course, which they can have if these assemblies will disperse; if not I fear the consequences.

I send this to your Excellency as confidential, as I wish not to take any part in the affair, or be known in it.

With consideration of high regard, I am, dear sir, your Excellency's most obedient servant,

SIDNEY RIGDON."

I read the doings of the city council to Dr. Wakefield, and gave him a volume of the Times and Seasons. About 4 p.m., I rode out with Dr. Bernhisel. Pleasant and warm day; towards night some clouds.

A Mr. Norton was tried before Esq. Aaron Johnson, J.P., on a charge of firing Foster's printing office, and acquitted.

Saturday, 15.—At home. Two brethren came from Lima, and said that Col. Levi Williams had demanded the arms belonging to the Mormons in that neighborhood; they wished my advice on the subject. I told them that when they gave up their arms to give up their lives with them as dear as possible.

It is reported that a company of men were constantly training at Carthage. Mr. John M. Cane from Warsaw said that several boxes of arms had arrived at Warsaw from Quincy; there was some considerable excitement, but expected they were going to wait the meeting

at Carthage, which was fixed for the middle of next week.

The "Maid of Iowa" arrived at 2½ p.m., while I was examining the painting of "Death on the Pale Horse," by Benjamin West, which has been exhibiting in my reading room for the last three days. The "Maid" had lost her lighter which was loaded at the time with corn and lumber, it having broken in two on a snag in the Iowa river.

This morning Samuel James started for Springfield to carry letters and papers to Gov. Ford concerning the destruction of the Expositor Press.

About 7 p.m., I rode out with O. P. Rockwell.

I received the following letter:

"Fort Madison, June 15th, 1844.

"Gen. Joseph Smith:

"Dear Sir:—I have been informed that a writ was issued against the steam ferry 'New Purchase' for wharfage on Tuesday last, but no such writ has been served or shown to me, and I am anxious to learn the facts of the case; if it is required I will pay wharfage with the greatest of pleasure, but I would dislike to have cost to pay in addition. I expect to visit this place with my boat at least once a week during the season, you will confer a favor on me by informing me in relation to the ordinances regulating wharfage, &c.

It has been rumored that the 'New Purchase' was employed to convey to Nauvoo an armed force to attack the citizens in connexion with other companies on account of the late difficulties at your place, but it is not true. I assure you that the boat will not be employed in any unlawful enterprise, and I further assure you that there is no unkind feeling existing in our place against the people of your place.—I remain, yours, with respect,

A. LADD,

Captain of the 'New Purchase.'

"Gen. Joseph Smith, Nauvoo, Ill."

A conference was held at Franklin, Michigan. Present of the Twelve: W. Woodruff and Geo. A. Smith; Elder Geo. A. Smith presided. Nine branches were represented comprising 170 members, 8 Elders, 5 Priests, 5 Teachers and 3 Deacons. There were ordained 1 High Priest, 9 Elders, 2 Priests and 1 Deacon, under the hands of Elders W. Woodruff, Geo. A. Smith and C. C. Rich.

Sunday, 16.—I preached at the stand at 10 a.m.; before I closed my remarks it rained severely. The following synopsis was reported by Elder Thomas Bullock, whom I had transferred from the duties of clerk of the "Maid of Iowa" to my office:

"MEETING IN THE GROVE, EAST OF THE TEMPLE, JUNE 16, 1844.

Prayer by Bishop N. K. Whitney.

Choir sang, 'Mortals awake.'

President Joseph Smith read the 3rd chap. of Revelations, and took for his text 1st chap. 6th verse, 'And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him be glory and dominion for ever and ever: Amen.'

It is altogether correct in the translation. Now you know that of late some malicious and corrupt men have sprung up and apostatized from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; and they declare that the Prophet believes in a plurality of Gods, and, lo and behold, we have discovered a very great secret, they cry, the Prophet says there are many Gods, and this proves that he has fallen.

It has been my intention for a long time to take up this subject, and lay it clearly before the people and show what my faith is in relation to this interesting matter. I have contemplated the saying of Jesus (Luke 17 ch. 26 v.) 'And as it was in the days of Noah, so shall it be also in the days of the Son of Man.' And if it rains I'll preach this doctrine, for the truth shall be preached.

I will preach on the plurality of Gods. I have selected this text for that express purpose. I wish to declare I have always, and in all congregations when I have preached on the subject of the Deity, it has been the plurality of Gods. It has been preached by the Elders fifteen years.

I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit, and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. If this is in accordance with the New Testament, lo and behold, we have three Gods anyhow, and they are plural, and who can contradict it.

Our text says, 'And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father.' The Apostles have discovered that there were Gods above; for Paul says God was the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. My object was to preach the Scriptures and preach the doctrine they contain, there being a God above the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. I am bold to declare I have taught all the strong doctrines publicly, and always teach stronger doctrines in public than in private.

John was one of the men, and the Apostles declare they were made kings and priests unto God the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ; it reads just so in the Revelations; hence the doctrine of a plurality of Gods is as prominent in the Bible as any other doctrine; it is all over the face of the Bible, it stands beyond the power of controversy, 'a wayfaring man though a fool need not err therein.'

Paul says there are Gods many and Lords many. I want to set it forth in a plain and simple manner, but to us there is but one God,

that is, pertaining to us, and he is in all and through all. But if Joseph Smith says there are Gods many and Lords many, they cry, 'Away with him—crucify him, crucify him.'

Mankind verily say that the Scriptures are with them. Search the Scriptures, for they testify of things that these apostates would gravely pronounce blasphemy. Paul, if Joseph Smith is a blasphemer, you are. I say there are Gods many and Lords many, but to us only one; and we are to be in subjection to that one, and no man can limit the bounds or the eternal existence of eternal time. Hath he beheld the eternal world, and is he authorized to say that there is only one God? He makes himself a fool if he thinks or says so, and there is an end of his career or progress in knowledge; he cannot obtain all knowledge for he has sealed up the gate to it.

Some say I do not interpret the Scriptures the same as they do; they say it means the heathen's gods. Paul says there are Gods many and Lords many, and that makes a plurality of Gods in spite of the whims of all men. Without a revelation I am not going to give them the knowledge of the God of heaven. You know and I testify that Paul had no allusion to the heathen gods; I have it from God, and get over it if you can. I have a witness of the Holy Ghost, and a testimony that Paul had no allusion to the heathen gods in the text. I will show from the Hebrew Bible that I am correct; and the first word shows a plurality of Gods; and I want the apostates and learned men to come here and prove to the contrary, if they can. An unlearned boy must give you a little Hebrew:—Berosheit bauran Eloheim ait aushamayem vehau aurait—rendered by King James' translators—'In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.' I want to analyze the word *Berosheit*. *Roshi* the head; *Sheit* a grammatical termination; the *Baith* was not originally put there when the inspired man wrote it, but it has been since added by an old Jew. *Bauran* signifies to bring forth; *Eloheim* is from the word *Eloi*—God, in the singular number; and by adding the word *heim* it renders it Gods. It read first—'In the beginning the head of the Gods brought forth the Gods,' or as others have translated it—'the head of the Gods called the Gods together.' I want to show a little learning as well as other fools:

'Drink deep or taste not the Pierian spring;  
Shallow draughts intoxicate the brain;  
But drinking deep will sober us again.'

All this confusion among professed translators is for want of drinking another draught.

The head God organized the heavens and the earth; I defy all the learning in the world to refute me. 'In the beginning the heads of the Gods organized the heavens and the earth.' Now the learned priest and the people rage and the heathen imagine a vain thing. If we pursue the Hebrew text further it reads:—'Berosheit bauran Eloheim ait aushamayem vehau aurait'—'The head one of the Gods said, let us make man in our own image.' I once asked a learned Jew 'if the Hebrew language compels us to render all words ending in *heim* in the plural, why not render the first *Eloheim* plural?' He replied, 'that is the rule with few exceptions, but in this case it would ruin the Bible.' He acknowledged I was right. I came here to investigate these things precisely as I believe it; hear and judge for yourselves, and if you go away satisfied, well and good.

In the very beginning the Bible shows there is a plurality of Gods beyond the power of refutation. It is a great subject I am dwelling on; the word *Eloheim* ought to be in the plural all the way through—Gods. The heads of the Gods appointed one God for us; and when you take a view of the subject, it sets one free to see all the beauty, holiness and perfection of the Gods. All I want is to get the simple naked truth and the whole truth.

Many men say there is one God—the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost are only one God! I say, that is a strange God anyhow—three in one and one in three! it is a curious organization. 'Father, I pray not for the world, but I pray for them which thou hast given me.' 'Holy Father, keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are.' All are to be crammed into one God according to sectarianism; it would make the biggest God in all the world; he would be a wonderful big God; he would be a giant or a monster. I want to read 'the text to you myself:—I am agreed with the Father and the Father is agreed with me, and we are agreed as one.' The Greek shows that it should be agreed. 'Father, I pray for them which thou hast given me out of the world, and not for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word, that they all may be agreed; as thou, Father, art agreed with me, and I with thee, that they also may be agreed with us,' and all come to dwell in unity, and in all the glory and everlasting burnings of the Gods; and then we shall see as we are seen, and be as our God, and be as his Father. I want to reason a little on this subject; I learned it by translating the papyrus which is now in my house. I learned a testimony concerning Abraham, and he reasoned concerning the God of heaven; in order to do 'what said he—'Suppose we have two facts, that supposes another fact may exist; two men on the earth, one wiser than the other, would logically show that another who is wiser than the wisest may exist. Intelligencies exist one above another, so that there is no end to them.'