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HISTORY OF JOSEPH SMITH.

JUNE, 1842.

Thursday, 23.—I published the following:—

"To the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and to all the honorable part of the community.—It becomes my duty to lay before the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day-Saints and the public generally, some important facts relative to the conduct and character of Dr. John C. Bennett, who has lately been expelled from the aforesaid church, that the honorable part of community may be aware of his proceedings, and be ready to treat him, and regard him as he ought to be regarded, viz., as an impostor and base adulterer.

It is a matter of notoriety that the said Dr. John C. Bennett became favorable to the doctrines taught by the elders of the Church of Latter Day Saints, and located himself in the city of Nauvoo, about the month of August, 1840, and soon after joined the church. Soon after it was known that he had become a member of said church, a communication was received at Nauvoo, from a person of respectable character, and residing in the vicinity where Bennett had lived. This letter cautioned us against him, setting forth that he was a very mean man, and had another wife, and two or three children in McConnellsville, Morgan county, Ohio; but knowing that it is no uncommon thing for good men to be evil spoken against, the above letter was kept quiet, but held in reserve.

He had not been long in Nauvoo before he began to keep company with a young lady, one of our citizens; and she being ignorant of his having a wife living, gave way to his addresses, and became confident from his behavior towards her, that he intended to marry her; and this he gave her to understand he would do. I, seeing the folly of such an acquaintance, persuaded him to desist, and on account of his continuing his course, finally threatened to expose him if he did not desist. This, to outward appearance, had the desired effect, and the acquaintance between them was broken off.

But, like one of the most abominable and depraved beings which could possibly exist, he only broke off his publicly wicked actions to sink deeper into iniquity and hypocrisy. When he saw that I would not submit to any such conduct, he went to some of the females in the city, who knew nothing of him but as an honorable man, and began to teach them that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes was a doctrine believed in by the Latter Day Saints, and that there was no harm in it; but this failing, he had recourse to a more influential and desperately wicked course, and that was to persuade them, that myself and others of the authorities of the church, not only sanctioned but practised the same wicked acts, and when asked why I publicly preached so much against it, said that it was because of the prejudices of the public, and that it would cause trouble in my own house. He was well aware of the consequence of such wilful and base falsehoods, if they should come to my knowledge, and consequently endeavored to persuade his dupes to keep it a matter of secrecy, persuading them there would be no harm if they should not make it known. This proceeding on his part answered the desired end; he accomplished his wicked purposes; he seduced an innocent female by his lying, and subjected her character to public disgrace, should it ever be known.

But his depraved heart would not suffer him to stop here. Not being contented with having disgraced one female, he made the attempt upon others; and, by the same plausible tale, overcame them also, evidently not caring whose character was ruined, so that his wicked, lustful appetites might be gratified.

Some time about the early part of July, 1841, I received a letter from Elder H. Smith and Wm. Law, who were then in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This letter was dated June 15th, and contained the particulars of a conversation betwixt them and a respectable gentleman from the neighborhood where Bennett's wife and children resided. He stated to them that it was a fact that Bennett had a wife and children living, and that she had left him because of his ill treatment towards her. This letter was read to Bennett, which he did not attempt to deny, but candidly acknowledged the fact.

Soon after this information reached our ears, Dr. Bennett made an attempt at suicide by taking poison, but he being discovered before it had taken effect, and the proper antidotes being administered, he recovered; but he very much resisted when an attempt was made to save him. The public impression was, that he was so much ashamed of his base and wicked conduct, that he had recourse to the above deed to escape the censures of an indignant community.

It might have been supposed that these circumstances, transpiring in the manner they did, would have produced a thorough reformation in his conduct; but alas! like a being totally destitute of common decency and without any government over his passions, he was soon busily engaged in the same wicked career, and continued until a knowledge of the same reached my ears. I immediately charged him with it, and he admitted

that it was true; but in order to put a stop to all such proceedings for the future, I publicly proclaimed against it, and had those females notified to appear before the proper officers, that the whole subject might be investigated and thoroughly exposed.

During the course of investigation, the foregoing facts were proved by credible witnesses, and were sworn and subscribed to before an alderman of the city, on the 15th ult. The documents containing the evidence are now in my possession.

We also ascertained by the above investigation that others had been led by his conduct to pursue the same adulterous practice, and in order to accomplish their detestable designs made use of the same language insinuated by Bennett, with this difference, that they did not hear me say anything of the kind, but Bennett was one of the heads of the church, and he had informed them that such was the fact, and they credited his testimony.

The public will perceive the aggravating nature of this case, and will see the propriety of this exposure. Had he only been guilty of adultery, that was sufficient to stamp disgrace upon him, because he is a man of better information, and has been held high in the estimation of many. But, when it is considered that his mind was so intent upon his cruel and abominable deeds, and his own reputation not being sufficient to enable him to do it, he must make use of my name in order to effect his purposes, an enlightened public will not be astonished at the course I have pursued.

In order that it may be distinctly understood that he wilfully and knowingly lied in the above insinuations, I will lay before my readers an affidavit taken before an alderman of the city, after I had charged him with these things:—

State of Illinois,)

City of Nauvoo (

Personally appeared before me, Daniel H. Wells, an alderman of said city of Nauvoo, John C. Bennett, who being duly sworn according to law, depose and saith,—that he never was taught anything in the least contrary 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 whatever, either in public or private; and that he never did teach 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.

Sworn to, and subscribed before me, this 17th day of May, A.D. 1842.

DANIEL H. WELLS, Alderman.

The following conversation took place in the city council, and was elicited in consequence of its being reported that the doctor had stated that I had acted in an indecorous manner, and given countenance to vices practised by the doctor and others:—

Dr. John C. Bennett, ex-mayor, was then called upon by the mayor to state if he knew aught against him; when Mr. 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. I publicly avow that any one who has said that I have stated that General Joseph Smith has given me authority to hold illicit intercourse with women, is 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. I have heard it said that I should become a second Avar by withdrawing from the church, and that I was at variance with the heads, and should use an influence against them, because I resigned the office of mayor; this 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 then asked: Will you please state definitely whether you know anything against my character either in public or private?

General Bennett answered: I do not; in all my intercourse with General Smith, in public and in private, he has been strictly virtuous.

WILSON LAW,
HIRAM KIMBALL,
BRIGHAM YOUNG,
WILLARD RICHARDS,
HEBER C. KIMBALL,
W. WOODRUFF,
GEO. A. SMITH,
N. K. WHITNEY,
ORSON SPENCER,
JOHN TAYLOR,
JOHN P. GREENE,
GUSTAVUS HILLS,
G. W. HARRIS.

JAMES SLOAN, City Recorder.

May 19, 1842.

After I had done all in my power to persuade him to amend his conduct, and these facts were fully established (not only by testimony, but by his own confessions) he having acknowledged

that they were true, and seeing no prospect of any satisfaction from his future life, the hand of fellowship was withdrawn from him as a member of the church by the officers; but on account of his earnestly requesting that we would not publish him to the world, we concluded not to do so at that time, but would let the matter rest until we saw the effect of what we had already done.

It appears evident that as soon as he perceived that he could no longer maintain his standing as a member of the church, nor his respectability as a citizen, he came to the conclusion to leave the place, which he has done, and that very abruptly; and had he done so quietly, and not attempted to deceive the people around him, his case would not have excited the indignation of the citizens, so much as his real conduct has done. In order to make his case look plausible, he has reported that he had withdrawn from the church because we were not worthy of his society; thus, instead of manifesting a spirit of repentance, he has to the last proved himself to be unworthy the confidence or regard of any upright person, by lying to deceive the innocent, and committing adultery in the most abominable and degraded manner.

We are credibly informed that he has colleague with some of our former wicked persecutors, the Missourians, and has threatened destruction upon us; but we should naturally suppose, that he would be so much ashamed of himself at the injury he has already done to those who never injured, but befriended him in every possible manner, that he could never dare to lift up his head before an enlightened public with the design either to misrepresent or persecute; but, be that as it may, we neither dread him nor his influence, but this much we believe, that unless he is determined to fill up the measure of his iniquity and bring sudden destruction upon himself from the hand of the Almighty, he will be silent, and never more attempt to injure those concerning whom he has testified upon oath he knows nothing but that which is good and virtuous.

Thus I have laid before the Church of Latter Day Saints, and before the public, the character and conduct of a man who has stood high in the estimation of many; but from the foregoing facts it will be seen that he is not entitled to any credit, but rather to be stamped with indignity and disgrace so far as he may be known. What I have stated, I am prepared to prove, having all the documents concerning the matter in my possession, but I think that to say further is unnecessary, as the subject is so plain that no one can mistake the true nature of the case.—I remain, yours respectfully,

JOSEPH SMITH.

Nauvoo, June 23, 1842.

I have been engaged in domestic affairs and counseling the brethren the last week.

I addressed the following letter to Richmond, Massachusetts:—

Nauvoo, June 23, 1842.

Sister Jennetta Richards,—Agreeably to your request, in the midst of all the bustle and business of the day, and the care of all the churches both at home and abroad, I now embrace a moment to address a few words to you, thinking peradventure it may be a consolation to you, to know that you too are remembered by me, as well as all the saints.

My heart's desire and prayer to God is all the day long for all the saints, and in an especial and particular manner for those whom he hath chosen and anointed to bear the heaviest burthens in the heat of the day, among which number is your husband received—a man in whom I have the most implicit confidence and trust. You say I have got him; so I have, in the which I rejoice, for he has done me great good, and taken a great burthen off my shoulders since his arrival in Nauvoo. Never did I have a greater intimacy with any man than with him. May the blessings of Elijah crown his head for ever and ever. We are about to send him in a few days after his dear family; he shall have our prayers fervently for his safe arrival to their embraces, and may God speed his journey, and return him quickly to our society; and I want you, beloved sister, to be a general in this matter, in helping him along, which I know you will. He will be able to teach you many things which you never have heard; you may have implicit confidence in the same.

I have heard much about you by the Twelve, and in consequence of the great friendship that exists between your husband and me, and the information they all have given me of your virtue and strong attachment to the truth of the work of God in the last days, I have formed a very strong brotherly friendship and attachment for you in the bonds of the gospel. Although I never saw you, I shall be exceedingly glad to see you face to face, and be able to administer, in the name of the Lord, some of the words of life to your consolation, and I hope that you may be kept steadfast in the faith, even unto the end.

I want you should give my love and tender regard to br. Richard's family, and those who are friendly enough to me to inquire after me in that region of country, not having but very little time to apportion to any one, and having stolen this opportunity, I therefore subscribe myself, in haste, your most obedient brother in the fullness of the gospel.

JOSEPH SMITH.

P.S. Br. Richards having been with me for a long time, can give you any information which you need, and will tell you all about me. I shall

be very anxious for his return; he is a great prop to me in my labors.

The Affghan war has cost Great Britain \$15,000,000 per annum since its commencement.

Friday, 24—Called St. John's day. I rode in Masonic procession to the Grove, where a large assembly of masons and others listened to an address from President Rigdon. Dined at the Masonic Hall Hotel, kept by br. Alexander Mills.

Wrote Governor Carlin as follows:—

Nauvoo, June 24, 1842.

Thomas Carlin, governor of the State of Illinois:

Dear Sir,—It becomes my duty to lay before you some facts relative to the conduct of our Major General, John C. Bennett, which have been proven beyond the possibility of dispute, and which he himself has admitted to be true in my presence.

It is evident that his general character is that of an adulterer of the worst kind, and although he has a wife and children living, circumstances which have transpired in Nauvoo, have proven to a demonstration that he cares not whose character is disgraced, whose honor is destroyed, nor who suffers, so that his lustful appetite may be gratified; and further, he cares not how many, nor how abominable the falsehoods he has to make use of to accomplish his wicked purposes, even should it be that he brings disgrace upon a whole community.

Some time ago, it having been reported to me that some of the most aggravating cases of adultery had been committed upon some previously respectable females in our city, I took proper measures to ascertain the truth of the report, and was soon enabled to bring sufficient witnesses before proper authority to establish the following facts:—

More than 12 months ago, Bennett went to a lady in the city and began to teach her that promiscuous intercourse between the sexes was lawful, and no harm in it, and requested the privilege of gratifying his passions; but she refused in the strongest terms, saying that it was very wrong to do so, and it would bring a disgrace on the church.

Finding this argument ineffectual, he told her that men in higher standing in the church than himself not only sanctioned, but practised the same deeds; and, in order to finish the controversy, said and affirmed that I both taught and acted in the same manner, but publicly proclaimed against it, in consequence of the prejudice of the people, and for fear of trouble in my own house. By this means he accomplished his designs; he seduced a respectable female with lying, and subjected her to public infamy and disgrace.

Not contented with what he had already done, he made the attempt on others, and, by using the same language, seduced them also.

About the early part of July, 1841, I received a letter from Pittsburgh, Pa.; in it was contained information setting forth that said Bennett had a wife and two or three children then living. This I read to him, and he acknowledged it was true.

A very short time after this, he attempted to destroy himself by taking poison; but being discovered before it had taken sufficient effect, and proper antidotes administered, he recovered.

The impression made upon the minds of the public by this event, was, that he was so ashamed of his base conduct, that he took this course to escape the censures of a justly indignant community. It might have been supposed that after this he would have broke off his adulterous proceedings; but to the contrary, the public consternation had scarcely ceased before he was again deeply involved in the same wicked proceedings, and continued until a knowledge of the fact reached my ears. I immediately charged him with the whole circumstance, and he candidly acknowledged the truth of the whole.

The foregoing facts were established on oath before an alderman of the city: the affidavits are now in my possession.

In order that the truth might be fully established, I asked Bennett to testify before an alderman, whether I had given him any cause for such aggravating conduct. He testified that I never taught him that illicit intercourse with females was under any circumstances justifiable, neither did he ever hear me teach any thing but the strictest principles of righteousness and virtue. This affidavit is also in my possession. I have also a similar affidavit taken before the city council, and signed by the members of the council.

After these things transpired, and finding that I should resist all such wicked conduct, and knowing that he could no longer maintain himself as a respectable citizen, he has seen fit to leave Nauvoo, and that very abruptly.

I have been credibly informed that he is colleague with some of our former cruel persecutors, the Missourians, and that he is threatening destruction upon us; and under these circumstances I consider it my duty to give you information on the subject, that a knowledge of his proceedings may be before you in due season.

It can be proven by hundreds of witnesses that he is one of the basest of liars, and that his whole routine of proceedings, while among us, has been of the basest kind.

He also stated here that he had resigned his commission as major-general to the Governor;