

TO THE BRETHREN IN CONFERENCE ASSEMBLED:—

1 ON April 27, 1890, after the Conference adjourned, Bro. E. C.
2 Briggs filed in my office the following document requesting me to
3 not publish in the minutes of the session the report of the Twelve
4 upon the matter of charges against him before the Quorum:—

5 To the President of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of
6 Latter Day Saints:—

7 Dear Sir and Brother:—I feel anxious with reference to the de-
8 cision made by the Quorum of Twelve in the matter in which
9 charges were preferred against me in nine several counts, as I un-
10 derstood that it is the intention to publish the decision of the Quo-
11 rum and send it out to all Saints and the world.

12 Whatever others may think, I know the charges against me are
13 false, and a publication of the findings will greatly injure me and
14 my reputation.

15 I was ordained a minister in the Reorganized Church as early as
16 1852. I have represented the work of the Church as a minister in
17 some capacity ever since, and have preached in the greater part of
18 the United States from Maine to California, and in the Canadas.

19 My friends and fellow-workmen in Christ are scattered over all
20 this vast territory, and a publication by the Church of the charges
21 and findings made against me will extend over all this vast territory
22 and forever injure and slander me before the people, and I have no
23 power of redress to stop this injury, except that you do not publish
24 this matter. I therefore take this opportunity to appeal to you as
25 the highest officer in the Church that no such publication be made
26 against me, as it will be a great injury to me and my family, as well
27 as the work that I have labored so long to build up.

28 I expect to give like notice to the Quorum of Twelve, also the
29 Bishop of the Church, and the Business Manager of the Herald
30 Office, or Publishing House.

31 Very truly, with all hope in the gospel of Christ,

32 E. C. BRIGGS.

33 LAMONI, IOWA, April 27, 1900.

34 I thereupon took the matter into consideration, consulting with
35 Counsellors A. H. Smith and E. L. Kelley, and those members of
36 the Quorum of Twelve who were yet at Lamoni. After such con-
37 sultation I gave the matter further consideration, and without
38 involving any of the brethren named in my action, and for the fol-
39 lowing reasons, I decided to not publish the report referred to:—

40 1. The question of right of appeal on the part of Bro. E. C.
41 Briggs; whether such right exists.

42 2. The trial before the Quorum was *ex parte*; Bro. Briggs plead
43 to the jurisdiction of the Quorum and requested that he be sent to
44 the High Council; the health of Bro. Briggs was poor, and he was
45 quite unfit, in my judgment, to engage in and endure the stress of a
46 trial at the time.

47 3. The age of Bro. Briggs and his long period of service, it

48 seemed to me, would warrant the exercise of great leniency; and
49 as the decision of the Quorum was intended to affect his standing
50 in the Quorum only, as stated by themselves, until such time as he
51 might make suitable reconciliation to the Quorum, I deemed it un-
52 necessary to spread the matter before the public, before Bro.
53 Briggs had had sufficient time to make such reconciliation, if it
54 should be possible for him to do so.

55 4. I was of the opinion that the interest and well-being of the
56 Church as an entirety would be better conserved by not publishing
57 the report than it could possibly be by its publication; and believ-
58 ing that under the conditions I had the right to so withhold publi-
59 cation as the President and General Officer of the Church, I did it,
60 and avowed my responsibility for the act and my willingness to
61 answer to the Conference for such action.

62 The protest of the Secretary of the Church, Bro. R. S. Salyards,
63 was sufficient to avoid the lapse of any and all Conference rights,
64 and for that reason I refused to publish protests sent me by several
65 members of the Quorum of Twelve, the Northern Illinois district
66 conference, and the Plano, Illinois, branch.

67 I have declined to be drawn into a discussion of my action with
68 individuals or to permit a discussion of it through the *Herald*, be-
69 lieving that I was and am amenable to Conference, and Conference
70 only, for my action in the premises, and further believing that a
71 personal discussion of the affair by myself or others would result in
72 misunderstanding, possible recrimination, and thus mischief to
73 individuals and the work.

74 I have evidence that others have not taken this view of the affair
75 which I will submit to Conference if so desired. I am now ready
76 to answer to the Conference, or any competent Court of the
77 Church, and to submit to the decision that may be reached in the
78 premises, wishing it to be distinctly understood by all that no one
79 but myself is responsible for my act; hence no one else is to be
80 disciplined or punished if discipline and punishment are necessary.

81 In connection with the foregoing I further state that I received a
82 copy of the minutes of the Northern Illinois district conference,
83 containing a preamble and resolution, a purported statement of the
84 case of Bro. Briggs before the Quorum and the findings of the
85 Quorum thereon, which minutes I withheld from the *Herald* for
86 reasons similar to those I have herein given.

87 In the confident belief that I acted within my right and for the
88 best good of the Church, I submit myself to the consideration and
89 decision of the Conference.

90

JOSEPH SMITH.

91 April 6, 1901.