No. 26.

WAS JOSEPH SMITH A POLYGAMIST?

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There is now going the rounds of the press an account of a celebration held at Salt Air, near Salt Lake City, Utah, June 1, 1899, in honor of the ninety-eighth birthday of Brigham Young deceased.

It is said that six of his surviving plural wives were present at the banquet. Two of these; viz., Zina D. Huntington Young, and Emily D. Partridge Young, it is asserted, were once the wives of Joseph Smith, and subsequently became the wives of Young, for time only, to be delivered to Joseph Smith in eternity. On account of this latter claim the report has been sent us by several persons with the request that we reply.

First, we will state that the question as to whether Joseph Smith taught or was in the practice of polygamy or not, is not a material one so far as our faith is concerned; for Jesus Christ, and not Joseph Smith, is the author of that faith, and the conduct of Joseph Smith cannot affect it.

Only our estimate of Joseph Smith as a man can be affected by his conduct. Believing as we do that Joseph Smith was an instrument in God's hands in restoring the ancient gospel, we prefer to believe that he remained faithful and pursued the paths of honor and virtue unto the end of his life. The representatives of the Reorganized Church have therefore and do now call upon those who affirm that he was a polygamist for the proof. The rules of evidence do

not require anyone to affirm a negative, hence we do not affirm that he was not guilty, but call upon those making the charge to establish their affirmation; but we claim the right to examine the testimony offered. This we consider legitimate and fair.

Let us examine the evidence upon which the claim is based that these two women sustained that relation to Joseph Smith. Each claims to this effect, and upon their statements the case rests so far as we know.

We will take the case of Mrs. Zina D. Huntington Young, as given in their own publications. In "Representative Women of Deseret," page 12, the following statement is found:—

Sr. Zina was married in Nauvoo, and had two sons; but this not proving a happy union, she subsequently separated from her husband. Joseph Smith taught her the principle of marriage for eternity, and she accepted it as a divine revelation, and was sealed to the Prophet for time and all eternity, after the order of the new and everlasting covenant.

Neither the date of her marriage to Mr. Jacobs nor that of her sealing to Joseph Smith is given in this extract; but fortunately we have the required data at hand. In the Record of Marriages in Hancock County, Illinois, Book A, page 40, is the record of the marriage of Henry B. Jacobs and Zina D. Huntington, March 7, 1841, by John C. Bennett, Mayor of Nauvoo.

A careful search of the records discloses no divorce of these parties.

In the "Historical Record," published by Andrew Jenson, of the Utah Church, volume 6, page 233, is found the following:—

Zina D. Huntington, afterwards the wife of Pres. Brigham Young, sealed to the Prophet Oct. 27, 1841, Dimick B. Huntington officiating.

According to these statements, taken from official records, and the publications of the Utah people themselves, it was just *seven months and twenty days* after her marriage to Jacobs that she was sealed to Joseph Smith. During this *seven months and twenty days* she bore two sons to Jacobs, separated from him, obtained a divorce (of which there is no record), received instruction from Joseph Smith on the "principle of marriage for eternity," and was sealed to him. To suggest that further refutation is necessary would be an insult to the intelligence of the reader.

In the case of Emily D. Partridge Young, we need to say but little. In her testimony in the famous Temple Lot Suit she testified that she was married to Joseph Smith. At one time in her testimony she said this event transpired on March 11, 1843, and at another time gave the date May 11, 1843. (It is immaterial which date she intended to give.)

She also said:—

I was not married to Joseph Smith under the revelation on sealing, but I was married to him under the revelation on plural marriage.

Under cross-examination she was asked:—

Q.—Now, I would like for you to explain how you were married to Joseph Smith under the plural marriage revelation when the church you belong to claims that revelation was not given until July, 1843; just tell how you could be married under a revelation in March that was not given until July?

A.—Well, I do not know anything about that.—Plaintiff's Abstract, p. 364.

This certainly throws suspicion upon the testimony of this woman.

Elder Orson F. Whitney, in an article entitled, "An Ensign for the Nations," now

running in the *Southern Star*, published at Chattanooga, Tennessee, in order to cover this point states:—

It [plural marriage] was a key to the highest heaven, where family relationships formed on earth according to divine law, were perpetuated. Hence the revelation on plural marriage, committed to writing July 12, 1843, but the principle of which was revealed and practiced before that time by the Prophet and other leaders of the Church, etc.—*Southern Star*, June 24, 1899.

A clever dodge is this; but unfortunately for Mr. Whitney they published this so-called revelation on plural marriage in their Doctrine and Covenants as early as 1876, under the following headlines:—

Revelation on the Eternity of the Marriage Covenant, including Plurality of Wives. Given through Joseph, the Seer, in Nauvoo, Hancock County, Illinois, July 12th, 1843.

It will hardly do now for Mr. Whitney to assign an earlier date for the *giving* of this revelation. It only throws suspicion upon the whole affair, and causes thoughtful men who are judges of evidence to suspect that the so-called revelation is a trumped up affair, gotten up by men already in the practice of crime, who connected Joseph Smith's name with it to give it prestige among those who had confidence in his teachings.

In rebuttal we offer:—

First. That there can be found no word in favor of plural marriage in church publications issued before the death of Joseph Smith, June 27, 1844.

Second. That there is not nor has been any progeny of Joseph Smith except by his legal wife, Emma Hale, whom he married January 18, 1827.

Third. That after the death of Joseph Smith the existence of polygamy and plural marriage was universally denied, even by Brigham Young and his associates, until August 29, 1852.

Fourth. That on August 29, 1852, the purported revelation on plural marriage was made public, for the first time, at a special conference held in Salt Lake City, Utah; and that at that time Brigham Young declared:—

Though that doctrine has not been practiced by the Elders, this people have believed in it for years.

In support of the first statement given above we submit the following passages as being positively opposed to the plural wife system, and invite the presentation of any authorized statement supposed to favor such system:—

Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife: and concubines he shall have none: For I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women.—Book of Mormon (published 1830) Jacob 2: 6.

The following was given through Joseph Smith, February, 1831:—

Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit; and if he repents not, he shall be cast out.—D. C. 42: 7.

The following was given in March, 1831:—

And again, I say unto you, that whoso forbiddeth to marry, is not ordained of God, for marriage is ordained of God unto man; wherefore it is lawful that he should have one wife, and they twain shall be one flesh, and all this that the earth might answer the end of its creation; and that it might be filled with the measure of man, according to his creation before the world was made.—D. C. 49: 3.

On August 17, 1835, the Doctrine and Cove-

nants was accepted by the church in General Assembly; first by each of the quorums separately, and then by the assembly in collective capacity. An article on marriage, was at that time by unanimous vote, ordered printed in the book, as the following will show:—

President W. W. Phelps then read an article on Marriage, which was accepted and adopted, and ordered to be printed in said book, by a unanimous vote.—Minutes of General Assembly, D. C. p. 330.

That article on marriage contained the following ceremony:—

Marriage should be celebrated with prayer and thanksgiving; and at the solemnization, the persons to be married, standing together, the man on the right, and the woman on the left, shall be addressed, by the person officiating, as he shall be directed by the Holy Spirit; and if there be no legal objections, he shall say, calling each by their names: "You both mutually agree to be each other's companion, husband and wife, observing the legal rights belonging to this condition; that is, keeping yourselves wholly for each other, and from all others, during your lives." And when they have answered "Yes," he shall pronounce them "husband and wife" in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and by virtue of the laws of the country and authority vested in him: "May God add his blessings and keep you to fulfill your covenants from henceforth and forever. Amen."—D. C. 111:2.

The *Times and Seasons*, published at Nauvoo, Illinois, which was at the time the official church organ, in its issue for October 1, 1842, contains the following certificates:—

We the undersigned members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and residents of the city of Nauvoo, persons of families do hereby certify and declare that we know of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we give

this certificate to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system" is a creature of his own make as we know of no such society in this place nor never did.

S. Bennett,	N. K. Whitney,
George Miller,	Albert Pettey,
Alpheus Cutler,	Elias Higbee,
Reynolds Cahoon,	John Taylor,
Wilson Law,	E. Robinson,
W. Woodruff,	Aaron Johnson.

We the undersigned members of the ladies' relief society, and married females do certify and declare that we know of no system of marriage being practised in the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints save the one contained in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we give this certificate to the public to show that J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system" is a disclosure of his own make.

Emma Smith, President,
Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Counsellor,
Sarah M. Cleveland, Counsellor,
Eliza R. Snow, Secretary,

Mary C. Miller,	Catharine Pettey,
Lois Cutler,	Sarah Higbee,
Thirza Cahoon,	Phebe Woodruff,
Ann Hunter,	Leonora Taylor,
Jane Law,	Sarah Hillman,
Sophia R. Marks,	Rosannah Marks,
Polly Z. Johnson,	Angeline Robinson,
Abigail Works.	

—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 3, pp. 939, 940.

This agrees with the statement made by Elder P. P. Pratt, who was then one of the Twelve Apostles, and Editor of the *Millennial Star*, published in England. In the August, 1842, issue of the *Star* he states editorially:—

But, for the information of those who may be assailed by those foolish tales about the two wives, we would say that no such principle ever existed among the Latter Day Saints, and never will; this is well known to all who are acquainted with our books and actions, the Book of Mormon, Doctrine

and Covenants; and also all our periodicals are very strict and explicit on that subject, indeed far more so than the Bible.—*Millennial Star*, vol. 3, p. 74.

The utterances of Joseph and Hyrum Smith up to a few months before their deaths, and so far as we have authentic information of their teaching, were positively against polygamy or the plural wife system. The *Times and Seasons* for February 1, 1844, contains the following notice:—

NOTICE.

As we have lately been credibly informed that an elder of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by the name of Hiram Brown, has been preaching polygamy, and other false and corrupt doctrines, in the county of Lapeer, State of Michigan:—

This is to notify him and the church in general, that he has been cut off from the church for his iniquity; and he is further notified to appear at a special conference, on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges.

JOSEPH SMITH,
HYRUM SMITH,
Presidents of said Church.

—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 423.

In the same publication for March 15, 1844, is found a letter from Hyrum Smith, of which the following is an extract:—

NAUVOO, March 15, 1844.

To the Brethren of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, living on China Creek, in Hancock County, Greeting: — Whereas Brother Richard Hewitt has called on me to-day, to know my views concerning some doctrines that are preached in your place, and states to me that some of your elders say, that a man *having a certain priesthood*, may have as many wives as he pleases, and that doctrine is taught here: I say unto you that that man teaches *false doctrine*, for there is no such doctrine taught here; neither is there any such thing practiced here. And any man that is found

teaching privately or publicly any such doctrine, is culpable, and will stand a chance to be brought before the High Council, and lose his license and membership also: therefore he had better beware what he is about.—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 474.

The *Times and Seasons*, then edited by John Taylor, one of the Twelve Apostles, stated editorially in its issue for April 1, 1844:—

If any man writes to you, or preaches to you, doctrines contrary to the Bible, the Book of Mormon, or the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, set him down as an impostor. You need not write to us to know what you are to do with such men; you have the authority with you. Try them by the principles contained in the acknowledged word of God; if they preach, or teach, or practice contrary to that, disfellowship them; cut them off from among you as useless and dangerous branches, and if they are belonging to any of the quorums in the church, report them to the president of the quorum to which they belong; and if you cannot find that out, if they are members of an official standing, belonging to Nauvoo, report them to us.

Follow after purity, virtue, holiness, integrity, godliness, and everything that has a tendency to exalt and ennoble the human mind; and shun every man who teaches any other principles.—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, pp. 490, 491.

On our second proposition extended remarks are unnecessary. It is generally conceded that Joseph Smith had no issue except his children by Emma. Should there be any who dissent from this general concession, we invite them, as we have often done before, to authenticate the claim by bringing forward the heir, or by other competent evidence.

Mr. Wilford Woodruff, then President of the Utah Church, did in 1892 concede this lack of issue. On May 30, 1892, Mr. H. Neidig (not a member of any church), of Wampum, Pennsylvania, wrote Mr. Woodruff on this point, and

Mr. Woodruff, through his secretary, George Reynolds, replied as follows:—

The facts that you refer to are almost as great a mystery to us as they are to you; but the reason generally assigned by the wives themselves is, that owing to the peculiar circumstances by which they were surrounded, they were so nervous and in such constant fear that they did not conceive.

Comment is unnecessary, but we are not surprised at the effect of this on Mr. Neidig. He writes, under date of June 20, 1892, as follows:—

The answer came June 7th, and amazed me. I am not yet fully recovered from my astonishment that a grave man, on a grave subject, on a question which is bound to be a hinge on which must turn an important point of Mormon history, should thus seek to account for what he concedes to be a fact.

The inquiry of Mr. George F. Edmunds, of Carthage, Illinois, when considering this theory of Mr. Woodruff's, is pertinent. He says:—

WHAT! A MATURE MARRIED WOMAN, MARRIED BY THE SANCTION OF ALMIGHTY GOD, in fear? IN FEAR OF WHAT?

When we remember that this revelation was purportedly given for the purpose of *raising* up a righteous *seed*, and then consider the claim that all these women (twenty-seven or more, according to the allegations) became so frightened as to prevent the purpose of the institution being realized, we have reached the climax of absurdity.

If the reader will here pardon the digression we wish to kindly remind him that the claim that polygamy was or is essential to the raising up of a righteous seed is opposed to the revealed will of God, as the following passages will show:—

And did not he make one? Yet had he the residue of the Spirit. And wherefore one? That he might seek a godly seed. Therefore take heed to

your spirit, and let none deal treacherously against the wife of his youth.—Malachi 2: 15.

The teaching of the Book of Mormon is clear:—

Behold, David and Solomon truly had many wives and concubines, which thing was abominable before me, saith the Lord, wherefore, thus saith the Lord, I have led this people forth out of the land of Jerusalem, by the power of mine arm, that I might raise up unto me a righteous branch from the fruit of the loins of Joseph. Wherefore, I, the Lord God, will not suffer that this people shall do like unto them of old. Wherefore, my brethren, hear me, and hearken to the word of the Lord: For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife: and concubines he shall have none: For I, the Lord God, delighteth in the chastity of women. And whoredoms are an abomination before me: thus saith the Lord of hosts.—Jacob 2: 6.

In January, 1831, the Lord instructed his servants to go to Ohio, and promised to reveal unto them a law there, one of the purposes of which was to gather "a righteous people, without spot and blameless." The language of the revelation is as follows:—

And that ye might escape the power of the enemy, and be gathered unto me a righteous people, without spot and blameless: wherefore, for this cause I gave unto you the commandment, that ye should go to the Ohio; and there I will give unto you my law; and there you shall be endowed with power from on high, and from thence, whomsoever I will, shall go forth among all nations, and it shall be told them what they shall do; for I have a great work laid up in store, for Israel shall be saved, and I will lead them whithersoever I will, and no power shall stay my hand.—D. C. 38: 7.

They went to Ohio, according to direction, and there the Lord fulfilled his promise, and the law was given containing the following:—

Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shall cleave unto her and none else; and he that

looketh upon a woman to lust after her, shall deny the faith, and shall not have the Spirit: and if he repents not, he shall be cast out.—D. C. 42: 7.

This, then, was one among the many means that God ordained to gather "a righteous people, without spot and blameless;" and this is made emphatic in each of the three records. Can we then doubt what his will is concerning the union of the sexes?

Not only does the above indicate what the will of God is concerning marriage, and that the effect would be righteousness; but it indicates that by obedience to this law the church would "escape the power of the enemy." Then those who depart from this law must fall under "the power of the enemy." There is no escape from this conclusion.

In support of our third proposition we present the following:—

In *Times and Seasons* for November 15, 1844, appears a communication signed "An Old Man of Israel," from which we quote:—

Woe to the man or men who will thus willfully lie to injure an innocent people! The law of the land and the rules of the church do not allow one man to have more than one wife alive at once, but if any man's wife die, he has a right to marry another, and to be sealed to both for eternity; to the living and the dead! there is no law of God or man against it! This is all the spiritual wife system that ever was tolerated in the church, and they know it.—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 715.

This alone might not be considered authentic, but it received the indorsement of the Editor, Apostle John Taylor, who was afterwards President of the church in Utah. He wrote:—

For the communication of an "old man of Israel," and the letter of Elder Addison Pratt from the islands of the Pacific Ocean, we bespeak a hearty

welcome. They are genuine.—*Times and Seasons*, vol. 5, p. 711.

This same Apostle Taylor, in a discussion held at Boulogne-sur-Mer, France, in July, 1850, resented the charge of polygamy in the following vigorous language:—

We are accused here of polygamy, and actions the most indelicate, obscene, and disgusting, such that none but a corrupt and depraved heart could have contrived. These things are too outrageous to admit of belief; therefore leaving the sisters of the "White Veil," the "Black Veil," and all the other veils, with those gentlemen to dispose of, together with their authors, as they think best, I shall content myself by reading our views of chastity and marriage, from a work published by us, containing some of the articles of our faith.

He then read the article on marriage from Doctrine and Covenants, from which we have quoted the marriage ceremony. (See public discussion between John Taylor and C. W. Cleeve, et al., p. 8.)

In 1851 Elder William Smith, the only surviving brother of Joseph Smith, was industriously promulgating his charge that Brigham Young, et al., were practicing polygamy. Col. Thomas L. Kane wrote to President Fillmore in defense of Brigham Young and the Mormons, seeking to vindicate Young and accuse William Smith of slander. He wrote:—

The remaining charge connects itself with that unmixed outrage, the spiritual wife story, which was fastened on the Mormons by a poor ribald scamp, whom, though the sole surviving brother and representative of their Jo. Smith, they were literally forced to excommunicate for his licentiousness, and who thereupon revenged himself by editing confessions and disclosures of savor to please the public that peruses works in yellow paper covers.—*Millennial Star*, vol. 13, p. 344.

It may be claimed that the Mormons were not responsible for what Colonel Kane wrote; but they were willing to accept the benefit of the denial, and published it, without explanation, in one of their church papers; viz., the *Millennial Star*, under the headlines, "Charges against the Governor of Utah [Brigham Young] Disproved and Withdrawn." This was November 15, 1851, about nine months before they publicly avowed polygamy.

In conclusion upon this point we quote the testimony of William Marks, who was President of the Nauvoo Stake at the time of Joseph Smith's death:—

A few days after this occurrence I met with Brother Joseph. He said that he wanted to converse with me on the affairs of the church, and we retired by ourselves. I will give his words *verbatim*, for they are indelibly stamped upon my mind. He said he had desired for a long time to have a talk with me on the subject of polygamy. He said it eventually would prove the overthrow of the church, and we should soon be obliged to leave the United States, unless it could be speedily put down. He was satisfied that it was a cursed doctrine, and that there must be every exertion made to put it down. He said that he would go before the congregation and proclaim against it, and I must go into the High Council, and he would prefer charges against those in transgression, and I must sever them from the church unless they made ample satisfaction. There was much more said, but this was the substance. The mob commenced to gather about Carthage in a few days after, therefore there was nothing done concerning it.

After the Prophet's death, I made mention of this conversation to several, hoping and believing that it would have a good effect; but to my great disappointment, it was soon rumored about that Brother Marks was about to apostatize, and that all that he said about the conversation with the Prophet was

a tissue of lies. . . .—*Saints' Herald*, vol. 1, pp. 22, 23.

It is not difficult now to locate some of the transgressors referred to, as two at least of the men who have since been prominent in the Utah Church have confessed to having known about this system before Joseph Smith mentioned it:—

In a speech of Brigham Young, of June 21st, 1874, (See *Deseret News* of July 1 of that year), is found the following statement relative to the origin of the doctrine of polygamy:—

While we were in England (in 1839 and 40), I think, the Lord manifested to me by vision and his Spirit things that I did not then understand. I never opened my mouth to anyone concerning them, until I returned to Nauvoo; Joseph had never mentioned this; there had never been a thought of it in the church that I ever knew anything about at that time; but I had this for myself, and I kept it to myself.—*The Messenger*, vol. 1, p. 29.

Now comes Lorenzo Snow, present President of the church in Utah, and in a sermon delivered at St. George, Utah, May 8, 1899, he says:—

There is no man that lives that had a more perfect knowledge of the principle of plural marriage, its holiness and divinity, than what I had. It was revealed to me before the Prophet Joseph Smith explained it to me. I had been on a mission to England between two and three years, and before I left England I was perfectly satisfied in regard to something connected with plural marriage.—*Deseret Semi-Weekly News*, June 6, 1899.

In support of our fourth proposition but little is necessary.

It has frequently been admitted, and never to our knowledge denied, that the revelation in question was not made public until August 29, 1852. Therefore to quote largely upon this point is unnecessary. However, we will give the latest statement coming under our notice. Elder O. F. Whitney, in a "Sketch of Utah and

Mormonism," published in a "Souvenir of Utah," issued in 1899 from the press of George Q. Cannon and Sons Company, for E. L. and T. L. Talbot, says:—

As early as 1862 Congress had legislated upon the subject of polygamy, the plural marriage system of the Saints, practiced by Joseph Smith and other Mormon leaders at Nauvoo, but never publicly promulged by the church until 1852.

The statement of Brigham Young made on August 29, 1852, that the doctrine had not been practiced by the elders, is found on page 31 of Supplement to volume 15 of *Millennial Star*. It may be that this statement of Mr. Young's is false. We would not undertake to defend it. But his friends in Utah cannot afford to impeach him, for he is the principal witness upon whom they rely to prove the genuineness of the document introduced as a revelation on August 29, 1852. They may take either horn of the dilemma they choose. If they reject him as a witness, then they should dismiss their case which rests upon his testimony in favor of the genuineness of the plural marriage revelation. If they retain him as their witness, they are logically and legally bound by his testimony, and we shall insist that they accept his statement that the elders (which would include Joseph Smith) had not practiced polygamy or plural marriage before August 29, 1852. We await their motion. Shall the testimony of Brigham Young be stricken out or not? What say you?

An exhaustive treatise upon the issues would be too voluminous, nor is it necessary. We present this as a sufficient refutation of the allegations brought by our opponents, and await with patience the verdict of the jury—the public.

LAMONI, Iowa, July 15, 1899.