

HILDALE UTAH FIRESIDE TALK

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I have not come here to ask anything from you. I do not want any donation, nor for you to join anything. I just want to talk and hope to say something of interest to you.

For too long those who practice plural marriage have been looked upon as deceived enemies to be shunned. Shunning and excommunicating are how various church institutions prevent discourse and exchanging ideas. It is rooted in fear. Fear is the opposite of faith.

I have faith in Jesus Christ as the Redeemer and Lord, and I do not fear having a dialogue with you. I have studied the subject of plural marriage that divides us from one another. I think I have reached a correct conclusion about it.

Whether you believe it was originally begun by Joseph Smith perhaps as early as the 1830s, or was introduced by Brigham Young in 1852, it began in secret, protected from the expected opposition by lying to the public and denying the truth of it.

Like its beginning, it ended with lying to the public again. The 1890 “Manifesto” was a lie, intended to facilitate statehood for Utah. LDS plural marriages did not really end until April 1904. The plan was to obtain statehood, become self-governing, and then adopt laws that permitted plural marriage. If pledges were made along the way to obtain statehood, it was worth the temporary difficulties, and compromises. All would be fixed by statehood. The federal government, however, was aware of this intent, and would not permit it. Before being granted statehood, the church would need to do more than compromise. They would need to utterly repudiate the practice. It was a long time before church leaders came to that realization.

There are libraries of material written about the beginning, spread, discontinuance and opposition to this practice by the LDS church. And there are libraries of material used to justify continuing the practice by various splinter groups after the LDS church abandoned it. It requires a great deal of study (for me it took decades) to become informed enough to make what I think to be a correct decision about the events.¹

When I joined the LDS church in 1973 the missionary who baptized me told me about the LDS General Conference that happened every October and April. I was baptized on September 10, 1973 and was able to travel from New Hampshire and attend the October 1973 Semi-annual General Conference the month after I was

¹ I have already addressed this subject in 2015 in a paper that can be downloaded from the Restoration Archives titled *Plural Marriage* (restorationarchives.net/pdf/2015.04.02_Plural-

baptized. I stayed in the Centerville, Utah home of the missionary who baptized me at the invitation of his mother. Each morning during the conference we got up for breakfast, which his mother prepared for the family, and when we entered the kitchen the chairs were all turned away from the table so we could kneel, using the chair seat for our folded hands, to pray over both the meal and coming day. The missionary had a lovely family, and I brought good tidings from them back to him when I returned following the conference.

Years later when I was a student at BYU, and the returned missionary was working in Salt Lake, we would go to lunch together. During one of those lunch discussions I learned that his mother had become a plural wife while he was on his mission. He was opposed to her doing that, but shared with me a selection of materials his mother had studied that led her to accept the principle of plural wives. This began my search into the topic.

At first I was persuaded that it was a true teaching, restored through Joseph Smith, and would be part of our eternal families. Like many members of the LDS church, I accepted Section 132 as authentic, although the church and the law prohibited its practice. I thought it was important, and my study of it has continued ever since, now nearly five decades later. As recently as 2011 I still thought the practice originated with Joseph Smith, and was authentic.

In the last few years a great deal of new historical material has become publicly available.² As a result, I have changed my mind. I no longer believe it to be

² For example, The *Joseph Smith Papers* have been recently coming into print. They supersede the earlier *Documentary History of the Church*. They are now essential. But they are not the only newly available material required to understand Mormon history. The second LDS leader, Brigham Young, is now far more exposed to view because of the 2010 five-volume *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*. This collection totals 3,260 pages of material with 4,400 entries. Many of the entries are material not previously available. If you are trying to understand Brigham Young and you only consider what was written about him before 2010, you will only learn from a tiny fraction of what is now available. His own words expose him to view in a way biographies cannot ever achieve.

Only 350 copies of the *Complete Discourses of Brigham Young* were printed. They are hard to locate now, and the price has escalated. But they are important for anyone who is interested in studying Brigham Young, and are available on a CD set.

Another important historical source is the 10-volume set of *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, published in 1983. It has been out of print for 30 years, but remains invaluable to Mormon history. They have recently been reprinted and are currently available. The Wilford Woodruff journals is one of the primary sources for Mormon history.

The *Times and Seasons* was put into a 7-volume set in 2008. This Nauvoo newspaper covered events from November 1839 to February 1846. It is an important source for recording events at that place during that time.

There are many other sources now available. These included *The William Clayton Journals*, the *Far West High Council Minutes*, the *Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, *Diaries of J. Reuben Clark*, *The Diaries of Heber J. Grant*, *In the President's Office: Diaries of L. John Nuttall 1879-1892*, the diaries of David O. McKay were donated to the University of Utah Library and a book based on them (*David O.*

attributable to Joseph Smith, nor to be an authentic part of the restoration, nor approved by God. But I assure you I do understand that you sincerely believe otherwise. I do not question your conviction that it came from God through Joseph Smith. But I do not share that conviction. I think you have inherited a tradition from your misled fathers, and have no doubt entered into the relationship relying on that tradition. But in the Book of Mormon “traditions” were almost always “false” or wicked.³

I doubt you will change your mind without a great deal of study and effort. That, however, will be up to you. It would be foolish for me to think this talk will accomplish that, and I am not attempting to do that today. I only hope you will take advantage of the recently available historic documentation to investigate carefully this issue.

If you reach the same conclusion as I have, then I want to caution you about abandoning your current family. The scriptures tell us: “women have claim on their husbands until they are taken, ...All children have claim upon their parents until they are of age[.]” (T&C 79:1; D&C 83: 2,4.) And again, “But if any provide not for his own, and especially for those of his own house, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.” (RE 1 Tim. 1:13; LDS 1 Tim. 5:8.) Therefore, you cannot abandon the obligation you have toward your wives, nor can you parents neglect your duty to your children.

If you become convinced the practice of plural wives is not of God, then keep your family intact, and teach your children against it. Do not let your posterity continue to believe in a false tradition. It was required for the believing Nephites to teach the Lamanites of the errors in their traditions, and to bring them to understand the truth. If you awaken to the error of practicing plural marriage, teach your children against that false tradition, while you stay loyal to the obligation you have to your family.

As I studied this issue it was apparent the chronology of Section 132 was NOT known, other than it was purportedly put into a lost writing for the first time on July 12, 1843. Then, once written, the original was destroyed and only a copy in the handwriting of Joseph Kingsbury (who was not present when the revelation was received) survives as a copy of whatever was first revealed.⁴ The first portion of

McKay and the Rise of Modern Mormonism) is still in print, *The Mormon Church on Trial: Transcripts of the Reed Smoot Hearings*, *Candid Insights of A Mormon Apostle: The Diaries of Abraham H. Cannon 1889-1895*, and the diaries of William McLellin to mention only a few of the recent historic sources now available to study.

³ See, e.g., NC Mosiah 1:1; Alma 7:3; 12:2; 13:5; Hel. 5:16; LDS Mosiah 1:5; 10:12; 26:1; Alma 3:8; 9:16; 17:9; 24:7; 60:32; Hel. 5:51; among others.

⁴ If contemporary statements by Joseph and Hyrum can be trusted, the original revelation did not relate to present day marital relationships. In the City Council minutes of June 8 and 10, 1844 Joseph and Hyrum give an explanation of original revelation and its limitation:

Section 132 may have been written as early as 1829 and inspired by the material in Jacob Chapter 2 in the *Book of Mormon*. That seems more likely than by the later translation of the Old Testament, as LDS traditions hold.⁵ Because the text is very inconsistent in places, I speculated there were potentially five separate portions from different dates, later consolidated into one final document. Based on that assumption I tried to make sense of the document.

However, because of its internal inconsistencies, I suspected it had been altered between the July 1843 date and 1852 when it was published. I assumed the contradictions meant that one or the other, but not both, could be trusted. In an effort to sort out what could be trusted and what was an alteration, I published my attempt to salvage a corrected version. A copy of that failed attempt to edit the text of 132 is attached as Appendix B to this paper. However, ultimately it seemed to me that the document could not be fixed; at least not by me.

From 2014 to 2017 a committee worked on restoring the restoration scriptures and eliminating errors and improper additions that had crept in. As the effort to restore the scriptures into the form Joseph Smith intended for them to read, God commanded us to discard Section 132 and we received a replacement text by revelation. That replacement text is now in our scriptures as part of Teaching and Commandments, Section 157. (T&C Section 157, ¶¶ 34-43; a copy of which is attached to this paper as Appendix C.)

“[Hyrum] referred to the revelation [he] read to the [Nauvoo Stake] High council — that it was in answer to a question concerning things which transpired in former days & had no reference to the present time — that W[illiam] Law[,] when sick[,] [confessed and] said ^he had been guilty of adultery &^ he was not fit to live or die, had sinned against his own soul...” (John S. Dinger, *Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, Signature Books (Salt Lake City: 2011) p. 241.) “[The mayor said]...They make [it] a criminality of for a man to have a wife on the earth while he has one in heaven — according to the keys of the holy priesthood, and [the mayor] read the statement of W[illiam] Law in the Expositor, where the truth of God was transformed into a lie. [He] read [the] statements of Austin Cowles — & said he had never had any private conversation with Austin Cowles on these subjects, that he preached on the stand from the bible showing the order in ancient days[,] having nothing to do with the present time...” (*Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, p. 254.) “C[ouncillor] H[yrum] Smith — spoke to show the falsehood of Austin Cowles in relation to the revelation referred to — that it referred to former days [and] not the present time as stated by Cowles. [The Mayor said he had never preached the revelation in private as he had in public — had not taught it to the highest anointed in the Church ^in private^ which many confirmed.

“[The mayor said][,] on enquiring [of God regarding] the passage in [the Bible that in] the resurrection they neither marry &c[:] I received for [an] answer, Men in this life must be married in view of Eternity, [and that] was the [full] amount of the [content of the] revelation, otherwise [in the resurrection] they must remain as angels only in heaven, and [the mayor] spoke at considerable length in explanation of the[se] principles[.]” (*Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, pp. 255-256.) If you believe these statements, the original version of Section 132 could not read as the Joseph Kingsbury copy reads.

⁵ Dating explained in *Passing the Heavenly Gift*.

I have not been casual about evaluating the marriage practice you have embraced. This is a subject I have treated with seriousness and respect. I do not condemn you for believing what I too once believed about this matter. To be clear, however, I do not believe it originated with either God or Joseph Smith. It was a later-introduced error.

Joseph Smith was comforted by the Lord in Liberty Jail by these words: “The ends of the earth shall inquire after your 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. And your people shall never be turned against you by the testimony of traitors[.]” (T&C 139:7; D&C 122:1-3.)

I believe Joseph Smith was pure in heart, wise, noble and virtuous and that is why the Lord could commend his counsel and blessings to those who are similarly pure in heart, wise, noble and virtuous. It is important, I think, to recognize that part of being wise, noble and virtuous is to be truthful and honest.

The Book of Mormon warns us about a number of un-virtuous characteristics that define the damned: “woe unto the deaf that will not hear, for they shall perish. Woe unto the blind that will not see, for they shall perish also. Woe unto the uncircumcised of heart, for a knowledge of their iniquities shall smite them at the last day. Woe unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.” (RE 2 Ne. 6:10; LDS 2 Ne. 9:31-34.)

Churches ask their members to not listen to anyone but them. This is the “deafness” of those who will not hear. Mormon factions ask their members to look away, and refuse to see anything that challenges their teachings. This is the “blindness” the Book of Mormon warns against. I ask you to hear, as I have been willing to hear. I ask you to see, as I have been willing to see. Hearing and seeing have cost me membership in the LDS church. If it costs you membership in your chosen organization, then take comfort in knowing you are in company with Lehi, Nephi, Abinadi, Alma, Mormon and Moroni, among many others. You join company with those who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah when He lived in Jerusalem.

Churches use fear to make you deaf, blind and uncircumcised of heart. They claim to have authority from God, and if you depart from their umbrella of authority you risk God’s anger. They claim you cannot be saved apart from their authority. So, they say, “Be afraid! Be very afraid!” But as Christ taught in the Sermon on the Mount, “Fear not” because what He offers is much greater than what churches and institutions offer. He intends to save those whose ears hear, or in other words those who are humble enough to allow Him to teach. He intends to save those who open their eyes to see, or in other words those who are not blinded by the craftiness of religious

pretenders. He will save those who can recognize when a witness has been sent by Him, as I have been.

Following Joseph Smith's death, Mormonism splintered into several groups, the most successful branch being led by Brigham Young. Brigham Young's branch is most distinguished from the others by their public adoption of plural wives in 1852. It was by abandoning that practice that Mormonism splintered yet further.

When Wilford Woodruff adopted Official Declaration 1, it was to mislead the public. It was not to actually end the practice. The LDS church just moved plural marriages underground. After the Manifesto marriages were performed clandestinely, or in Mexico where they were legal, or on the water between California and Catalina Island in one instance.

As a consequence of the Reed Smoot Senate Confirmation Hearings, and President Joseph F. Smith being called to testify under oath in that proceeding, the underground practice finally had to end. Because he was cornered by questions from the Senators, Joseph F. Smith had to either admit the truth or end the practice. He chose to end it. In March, 1904 he denied under oath such marriages continued. Then in April he ended it. His letter of April 6, 1904 states:

OFFICIAL STATEMENT

"Inasmuch as there are numerous reports in circulation that plural marriages have been entered into contrary to the official declaration of President Woodruff, of September 26, 1890, commonly called the Manifesto, which was issued by President Woodruff and adopted by the Church at its general conference, October 6, 1890, which forbade any marriage violative of the law of the land; I, Joseph F. Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, hereby affirm and declare that no such marriages have been solemnized with the sanction, consent or knowledge of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, and

"I hereby announce that all such marriages are prohibited, and if any officer or member of the Church shall assume to solemnize or enter into any such marriage he will be deemed in transgression against the Church and will be liable to be dealt with, according to the rules and regulations thereof, and excommunicated therefrom.

JOSEPH F. SMITH,
President of the Church of Jesus Christ
of Latter day Saints."

. . . President Francis M. Lyman presented the following resolution and moved its adoption:

RESOLUTION OF ENDORSEMENT

“Resolved that we, the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints, in General Conference assembled, hereby approve and endorse the statement and declaration of President Joseph F. Smith, just made to this Conference concerning plural marriages, and will support the courts of the Church in the enforcement thereof.”

The resolution was then adopted, by unanimous vote of the Conference.⁶

It was this “Second Manifesto” that caused the resignation in 1905 of LDS apostle Matthias F. Cowley⁷ and the excommunication of apostle John W. Taylor in 1911.⁸ Between the first and second Manifestos, LDS authorities sealed plural marriages in secret, while church leaders lied about the continuation of the practice. The official version of LDS events therefore establishes that plural marriages began with nine years of church leaders lying about the practice and ended with fourteen years of lying by the church’s leadership.⁹ It is no wonder you, like me a few years ago, believe it should continue. So many years of LDS church lying makes it difficult to find the truth.

The wording of a revelation from God often requires careful, ponderous and solemn thought to discover its meaning. God’s word should not be given only a perfunctory reading. Or, as Joseph’s letter from Liberty Jail explained it:

“because the things of God are of deep import, and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Your mind, O man, if you will lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost Heavens, and search into and contemplate the lowest considerations of the darkest abyss, and expand upon the broad considerations of eternal expanse. You must commune with God. How much more dignified and noble are the thoughts of God than the vain imagination of the human heart? None but fools will trifle with the souls of men.” (T&C 138:18.)

From prison Joseph wrote about how much more might have been accomplished if believers in the restoration had taken salvation more seriously. He wrote about the Saints of that day (and composed words relevant if not altogether applicable to us today):

⁶ *Messages of the First Presidency*. Edited by James R. Clark. 6 Vols. Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1970, Vol. 4, pp. 84-85, quotes and all as in original.

⁷ Although not excommunicated, the LDS suspended his priesthood in May 1911.

⁸ This was also the basis for the excommunication of apostle Richard Lyman in 1943 when it was discovered he cohabited with a second wife.

⁹ The LDS church claims Section 132 was revealed in July 1843, the practice began in secret, and the secret was proclaimed publicly in 1852. They also acknowledge that marriages continued in secret after the 1890 Manifesto until discontinued in 1904.

“How vain and trifling have been our spirits, our conferences, our councils, our meetings, our private as well as public conversations: too low, too mean, too vulgar, too condescending for the dignified characters of the called and chosen of God, according to the purposes of his will from before the foundation of the world, to hold the keys of the mysteries of those things that have been kept hid from the foundation until now, of which some have tasted a little, and which many of them are to be poured down from Heaven upon the heads of babes, yea, the weak, obscure, and despicable ones of this earth.” (Id., ¶19.)

I hope you are willing to be careful, solemn and ponderous about the truth. We have all wasted enough time already. I know I have. Please take seriously the words given to you today.

In the years Joseph Smith led the church, he established the offices of elder, priest, teacher, deacon, apostle, high priest, president, seventy and patriarch. These were organizational offices, and not priesthood. There were, in the church during Joseph Smith’s lifetime, two forms of priesthood. As the LDS scriptures explain: “There are, in the church, two priesthoods, namely, the Melchizedek and Aaronic, including the Levitical Priesthood.” (D&C 107:1.)

There are only two priesthoods, not 10 or 16: This is a list of church offices:

elder,
priest,
teacher,
deacon,
apostle,
bishop,
high priest,
president,
seventy,
patriarch,
Relief Society President,
Sunday School President,
Elder’s Quorum President,
Gospel Doctrine Teacher,
Young Men’s President,
Young Women’s President, etc.

The LDS church, like your various fundamentalist factions, are merely organizations and not the priesthood.

Joseph Smith organized offices and gave them authority to preside. However, church leaders in 1838 turned on Joseph. Their positions of authority gave them credibility.

When they signed affidavits falsely claiming Joseph was a threat to Missouri non-Mormons, he was imprisoned on charges of treason. Before his imprisonment Joseph insisted on the church authorities being obeyed. But after reflecting on the abuse of church authority that led to his imprisonment, Joseph removed all authority of priesthood to control or impose upon others. Here is the new standard to keep in mind when someone claiming authority demands your submission:

Behold there are many called, but few are chosen, and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men, that they do not learn this one lesson--that the rights of the Priesthood are inseparably connected with the Powers of Heaven and that the Powers of Heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the principles of righteousness. That they may be conferred upon us, it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and when it has withdrawn, Amen to the Priesthood or the authority of that man. Behold, ere he is aware he is left unto himself to kick against the pricks, to persecute the Saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called, but few are chosen.

No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood, only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned, by kindness, by pure knowledge which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy and without guile[.] (T&C 139:5-6; D&C 121:34-42.)

I have given several talks about priesthood and authority claims made by others. Rather than make any claims myself, I only try to teach truths, and to allow you to decide the matter unencumbered by any demand that you respect authority or “keys.” Gentiles are prone to following claims of authority. As the Lord explained to His apostles, “You know that the princes of the gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you. But whoever will be great among you, let him be your minister. And whoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant, even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life, a ransom for many.” (RE Matt. 10:3; LDS Matt. 20:23-28.)

If this was good enough for our Lord, then I cannot in good conscience claim more. I am here to be His servant and to minister teachings that come from Him. I do not

demand your respect, but I hope to persuade you by the things I know and are able to say. Those who claim to have “keys” are largely ignorant of even the meaning of that term.

“The word keys is horribly misunderstood. I have made it a practice to not use the word because of all the foolish and vain ideas that have accumulated around it. Joseph used the term in a variety of ways: for example, to mean authority, or opportunity, and in others it refers to a correct idea. This is the most important meaning. The term in the context of priesthood is completely absent from the Book of Mormon, and that book is the keystone of our religion, containing the fullness of the gospel. The only time the word keys is referenced in the Book of Mormon, it refers to a physical set of keys to unlock a door to the treasury controlled by Laban (1 Nephi 1:18). Although Joseph used the term often and meant many things by it, the challenge is to understand priesthood without being distracted by a poorly defined, and often used term. Mormon institutions now use the term most often to connote their exclusive right, license or control. The LDS Handbook of Instructions states the following, ‘Priesthood keys are the authority God has given to priesthood leaders to direct, control, and govern the use of His priesthood on Earth.’ This definition is the opposite of the way scripture directs priesthood be used (see T&C 139:5–7). The LDS Handbook approach turns this scripture upside down and backwards: by virtue of priesthood keys they have the right to direct, control and exercise influence over others. Mormon institutions in general all use their preferred meaning of the term keys to denounce anything or anyone they view as a rival. That is nonsense, and I avoid using the term because of widespread abusive practice.” (*The Holy Order*, Oct. 29, 2017, paper p. 1.) A “key” unlocks information, or opens your understanding. It is tied to gaining an insight. Today men claiming to hold keys almost always take away light and truth and spread darkness.

The continuation of plural wives is related to claims about “keys” or “holding keys to seal” marriages. No matter which fundamentalist group is involved, the claim to have keys is tied to an incident that purportedly took place the night of September 26-27, 1886. The incident was reported to Arnold Boss by Lorin C. Woolley 43 years later on September 22, 1929. An extended explanation of why I do not believe the incident happened was published on my website in a series of posts titled: “Sorting Things Out” which has parts 1 through 5 (published from July 23 through July 27, 2012), which are all included in a chapter of the same name in Volume 5, *Remembering the Covenant*, pp. 1907-1927. If you are interested in why the claim to sealing power tied to John Taylor transferring sealing keys on September 26-27, 1886 in my view is not to be trusted, you can find my explanation there.¹⁰

As to the history of plural wives, the libraries of material I referred to earlier deserve very careful inspection. One great key to understanding (and that is a correct way to

¹⁰ For the reader’s convenience that material is included as Appendix D to this paper.

use that term) is to look at what existed as proof on and before June 27, 1844. If you do that you have a great deal of evidence that Joseph Smith did not practice, condone or introduce plural wives. Instead you have a great deal of public and private declarations that denounce and oppose it.

The only proof that ties Joseph Smith to the introducing plural wives into the restoration is a single document. That document was a copy, not an original, and that copy was hidden, if you trust the official story, for at least nine years, eight of those years after the murder of Joseph and Hyrum.

Brian C. Hales is the one who has most researched and written about the record in our day. He published a three-volume discussion of his findings. He is sympathetic to plural wives, and believes Joseph Smith introduced it. He believes the same as those of you who practice plural wives believe, and even though he does not practice it he thinks it a true doctrine and part of the restoration through Joseph Smith. But his research shows that there is only one document during his lifetime tying Joseph Smith to plural wives. That one document is what is known as D&C 132. Here what Hales found from his research:

“Beyond this revelation, no other document exists in which Joseph Smith specifically discusses the principle.” (*Joseph Smith’s Polygamy: Volume 3: Theology*, Brian C. Hales, Greg Koford Books, (Salt Lake City 2013) p. 3.)

...

“Establishing the Prophet’s precise instructions is difficult due to a lack of contemporary accounts recording Joseph Smith’s specific teachings on these lofty topics. Furthermore, a challenge arises regarding what sources should be considered as authoritative for defining his theology, ideology, and cosmology. Of course the most authoritative of sources would be the prophet himself, but his writings and recorded instructions on plural marriage are limited to the revelation on celestial and plural marriage, Doctrine and Covenants 132.” (Id., p. 69.)

Also, although Joseph Smith publicly denounced polygamy, there are no public statements in which he defended it. As the believer Hales laments:

“Unfortunately, no accounts of a public discourse discussing plural marriage have been found.” (Id., p. 70.)

That last statement is absolutely false. There are numerous contemporaneous and first hand accounts of statements made by both Joseph and his brother Hyrum (who was Assistant-President of the church at the time). What Hales means is that there is no public discourse discussing plural marriage as true and approved by God. There are many public discourses and publications from Joseph Smith condemning it.

These are only a few of what Joseph, Hyrum and Emma Smith stated publicly denouncing the plural wives practice found in D&C 132:¹¹

You can find the quotes below using the dates to locate the material in the *Joseph Smith Papers*:

October 5 1843 Joseph Smith journal entry – ““eve at home walked up and down st. with scribe.— and gave inst[r]uction to try those who were preaching teaching or ~~preaching~~ the doctrin of plurality of wives. on this Law. Joseph forbids it. and the practice ther[e]of— No man shall have but one wife.”

October 15 1843 Joseph Smith journal entry – Joseph preaching and says, “stop this spinning street yarn and talking about spiritual wives... I proclaim in the name of the Lord God that I will have nothing but virtue and integrity and uprightness...”

February 1 1844 *Times and Seasons* – Joseph and Hyrum Smith “Presidents of said Church” put the following NOTICE in the paper:

“As we lately have 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 inform 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 the Special Conference, on the 6th of April next, to make answer to these charges.” (*Times & Seasons*, Photo Reprint of the Original, (Salt Lake City: 2008), Volume 5, p. 423.)

February 15 1844 *Times and Seasons* – In the article WHO SHALL BE OUR NEXT PRESIDENT, after recommending Joseph Smith to be elected, the article states Joseph Smith will not ‘marry spiritual wives;’ nor commit any other outrageous act this election to help any party with, you must get some other persons to perform these king of offences for you[.]” (Id, p. 441.)

March 15 1844 *Times and Seasons* – includes a letter written by Hyrum Smith, stating:

“To the brethren of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latterday 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

¹¹ I have written and spoken about this subject, as have others, and this paper is not intended to gather all the information that shows Joseph’s (and Hyrum and Emma’s) public and private opposition to plural marriage. This is just to illustrate the point.

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.” (Id., p 474.)

April 1 1844 *Times and Seasons* – TO THE ELDERS ABROAD, a letter to the church published to warn against false teachings, stated:

“We very frequently receive letters from elders and individuals abroad, inquiring of us whether certain statements that they hear, and have been written to them, are true: some pertaining to John C. Bennett’s spiritual wife system; others in regard to immoral conduct, practiced by individuals, and sanctioned by the church; and as it is impossible for us to answer all of them, we take this opportunity of answering them all, once and for all.

“In the first place, we cannot but express our surprise that any elder or priest who has been in Nauvoo and has had an opportunity of hearing the principles of Truth advanced, should for one moment give credence to the idea that anything like iniquity is practiced, much less taught or sanctioned, by the authorities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints.

“We are the more surprised, since ever species of iniquity is spoken against, and exposed publicly at the stand, and every means made use of that possibly can be, to suppress vice, both religious and civil; not only so, but every species of iniquity has frequently been exposed in the *Times and Seasons*, and its practitioners and advocates held up to the world as corrupt men that ought to be avoided.

“If any man writes to you or preaches to you any doctrines contrary to the Bible, the Book of Mormon or the book of the Doctrine and Covenants, set him down as an imposter.” (Id., p. 490.)

Joseph Smith advocated for and persuaded the Nauvoo City Council to adopt an ordinance on May 14, 1842 punishing adultery with six months imprisonment: “[F]or every Act of Adultery, or Fornication, which can be proved, the Parties shall be imprisoned Six Months, and fined, each, in the Sum of five hundred to fifty thousand Dollars[.]”¹² Three days after the ordinance passed John Bennett resigned as Mayor of Nauvoo under accusations of adultery and fornication.

When John C. Bennett resigned his membership in the church he publicly testified, “I publicly avow that any one who has said that I have stated that General Joseph Smith

¹² *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger, ed., Signature Books, (Salt Lake, 2011), pp. 80-81.

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 men any such authority or license, & any who states it is a scoundrel & a Liar.”¹³ Joseph Smith confronted John C. Bennett in front of the City Council and asked, “Will you please state definitely whether you know any thing against my character either in public or private?” To which Bennett responded, “I do not; in all my intercourse with Gen. Smith, in public and in private, he has been entirely virtuous.”¹⁴

The character of Joseph Smith has been more abused by John C. Bennett than any other single source. Accordingly, the greatest obstacle to getting the truth is Mr. John C. Bennett. Because of who he was and what he did, his sexual improprieties were attributed to Joseph Smith. In the *Times and Seasons* edition for June 15, 1842, there was a little notice on the last page of the edition. The little notice said:

NOTICE.

The subscribers, Members of the First Presidency of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, withdrew the hand of fellowship from General John C. Bennett, as a christian, he having been labored with from time to time, to persuade him to amend his conduct, apparently to no good effect.

JOSEPH SMITH
HYRUM SMITH
WM. LAW

The following members of the Quorum of Twelve concur in the above sentiments.

BRIGHAM YOUNG
HEBER C. KIMBALL
LYMAN WIGHT
WILLIAM SMITH
JOHN E. PAGE
JOHN TAYLOR
WILFORD WOODRUFF
GEORGE A. SMITH
WILLARD RICHARDS

We concur in the above sentiment.

N.K. WHITNEY
V. KNIGHT
GEORGE MILLER

Bishops of the above mentioned Church.
Nauvoo, May 11th, 1842.

¹³ *Id.*, p. 84. The testimony was also printed in the *Times & Seasons* Vol. 3, p. 841, July 1, 1842.

¹⁴ *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 3, p. 841.

That is the complete notice. That was all that was intended to be done to deal with John C. Bennett. However, John C Bennett ‘did not go quietly into that good night.’ As soon as the notice was published he went out of his way to revise the history and make himself the good guy, and Joseph Smith and the Mormons the bad guys. He began to attribute to Joseph Smith and the members of the Church things he had done. By the July 1st edition of the *Times and Seasons*, almost the entire edition is devoted to discussing John Bennett.

The *Times and Seasons* for July 1st, the first lead article begins with this statement:

It becomes my¹⁵ duty to lay before for 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 the community may be aware of his proceedings, and be ready to treat and regard him as he ought to be regarded, viz: as an imposter and base adulterer.

The original notice in June said nothing about this. Because of Bennett’s campaign they had to discuss the ugly facts. The lead article describes,

...a communication had been 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 a wife, and two or three children in McConnelsville, 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.

They did not at first trust the information in the letter. But Bennett proved the content true by his misconduct in Nauvoo. Joseph was always willing to believe the best about people and to accept repentance at face value. The lead article explained how they dealt with him, “finally threatening him to expose him if he did not desist. This, to outward appearance, had the desired effect, and the acquaintance between them was broken off.” Meaning he claimed, and apparently stopped his sexual exploits.

Sadly, the article reports, “he only broke off his publicly wicked actions, to sink deeper into iniquity and hypocrisy.” Secretly, “he went to some of the females in the city, who knew nothing of him but as an honorable man, & began to teach them that

¹⁵ Joseph Smith was the editor and publisher of the *Times & Seasons* at that time.

promiscuous intercourse between the sexes, was a doctrine believed in by the Latter-Day Saints, and that there was no harm in it[.]”

The account continued, explaining, Bennett would “persuade them that myself and others of the authorities of the church not only sanctioned, but practiced the same wicked acts; and when asked why I publicly preached so much against it, said that it was because of the prejudice of the public, and that it would cause trouble in my own house.”

Those females Bennett persuaded to participate with him in illicit intercourse asked why Joseph Smith publicly preached against this disgusting behavior. Bennett’s explanation was a lie that lives on today. Bennett accused Joseph of hiding it because of expected criticism and Emma would discover the practice. However, Joseph excommunicated Bennett, exposed numerous others, and clearly did not fear public exposure of wrongdoing. He welcomed public exposure of the sexual misdeeds in Nauvoo. The trials were public. News reporters from outside Nauvoo attended some of the courts and reported on their content, just as the newspaper Joseph edited and published covered the Bennett affair. Bennett clearly lied.

Bennett “persuaded [his victims] that there would be no harm if they should not make it known.” He seduced these females “by his lying.” Joseph’s *Times and Seasons* article explained that, “Not being contented with having disgraced one female, he made an attempt upon others, and by the same plausible tale, overcame them also[.]”

“[I]t 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.”

Action against Bennett was delayed because “Dr. Bennett made an attempt at suicide, by taking poison.” This was thought to be a sign of remorse and shame and caused some hope he would reform. However, “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.” In response to this news, Joseph Smith “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.”

This edition of the *Times and Seasons* also reprinted an affidavit signed by John Bennett. It says:

John C. Bennett, who being duly sworn according to law, deposeth 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, even in public or private; and that he never did teach me in private that an illegal and illicit intercourse with females was, under any circumstances, justifiable; and that I never knew him so to teach others.

JOHN C. BENNETT.

Next the Aldermen and members of the City Council, in this same edition of the *Times and Seasons* also signed an affidavit recounting Dr. Bennett's testimony before them:

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 is a liar in the face of God, those who have said it are damn liars; they are infernal liars. He never, either in public or private, gave me any such authority or license, and any person who says it is a scoundrel and a liar.

Joseph asked Bennett in front of the Council, "Will you please state definitely whether you know anything against my character, either in public or in private?" General Bennett answered, "I do not. In all my intercourse with Gen. Smith, in private and in public, he has been strictly virtuous."

The edition then reprints affidavits signed by George Miller, one of which mentions Bennett "was an expelled Mason."

The subject gets taken up again in the August 1st edition of the *Times and Seasons*. Yet more affidavits, more public statements, and more acknowledgments are given. This time William Law provided an affidavit defending the character of Joseph and condemning what John Bennett attributed to him. Law's affidavit recounts,

I told him we could not bear with his conduct any longer—that there were many witnesses against him, and that they stated that he gave Joseph Smith as authority for his illicit intercourse with females. J.C. Bennett declared to me before God that Joseph Smith never taught him such doctrines, and that he never told any one that he (Joseph Smith) had taught any such things, and that any one who said so told base lies[.]

...

These statements he made to me of his own free will, in a private conversation which we had on the subject; there was no compulsion or threats used on my part[.]

...

On one occasion I heard him state before the city Council that Joseph Smith had never taught him any unrighteous principles, of any kind, and that if any one says that he ever said that Joseph taught such things they are base liars, or words to that effect.

In the Nauvoo City and High Council minutes there are accounts of trials that went on as Joseph sought out the participants to expose their sexual misconduct and bring it to an end. He did not tolerate it, and did not hide it when he learned of it.

Three days previous to May 14, 1842, Bennett resigned his mayoral post because he had been accused of “adultery, fornication, buggery and miscegenation.” Buggery is the euphemism used in that time period for homosexual relations. Miscegenation was the legal offense of a white person having intercourse with a black person, because that was mixing the races. He was accused of those things according to the newspaper account at the time.

So when you get to the minutes of the Nauvoo City Council for July 20, 1842, they go on record about the earlier testimony of Mayor John C. Bennett when he resigned office:

John C. Bennett was not under duress at the time he testified before the city council, May 19, 1842, concerning Joseph Smith’s innocence and virtue and pure teaching. ...there was no excitement at the time, nor was he in anywise threatened, menaced or intimidated. His appearance at the city council was voluntary; ...Joseph Smith asked him if he knew anything bad concerning his public or private character. He then delivered those statements contained in the testimony voluntarily, and on his own free will, and went of his own accord, as free as any member of the Council.

WILSON LAW, GEO A. SMITH, JOHN TAYLOR, GEO W. HARRIS, WILFORD WOODRUFF, NEWEL K. WHITNEY, VINSON KNIGHT, BRIGHAM YOUNG, HEBER C. KIMBALL, CHARLES C. RICH, JOHN P. GREEN, ORSON SPENCER, WILLIAM MARKS.

In the aftermath of John Bennett’s misconduct, Joseph pursued an effort to track down what had happened in Nauvoo. By May 21, 1842, the high council met and, “[A] charge [was] [preferred] against Chauncey L. Higbee by George Miller for unchaste and un-virtuous conduct with the widow [Sarah] Miller, and others.”¹⁶ In the trial, “Three witness[es] testified that he had seduced [several women] and at different times [had] been guilty of unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with them and taught the doctrine that it was right to have free intercourse with women if it was

¹⁶ *Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, p. 414, all as in original.

kept secret &c and also taught that Joseph Smith authorised him to practice these things &c”¹⁷

On May 25 the charge was preferred “against Ms. Catherine Warren by George Miller for unchaste and unvirtuous conduct with John C. Bennett and others. The defendant confessed to the charge and gave the names of several other [men] who had been guilty having unlawful intercourse with her[,] stating they taught the doctrine that it was right to have free intercourse with women and that the heads of the Church also taught and practiced it[,] ...learning that the heads of the church did not believe of [the] practice [of] such things[,] she was willing to confess her sins and did repent before God for what she had done and desired earnestly that the Council would forgive her.”¹⁸ She furnished the identities of the several men involved, resulting in yet more church court proceedings to stop the spread of Bennett’s mischief.

On September 3, 1842, “[A] charge was preferred against Gustavius Hills by Elisha Everett[,] one of the teachers of the Church[,] for illicit intercourse with a certain woman by the name of Mary Clift by which she was with child[,] and for teaching the said Mary Clift that that the heads of the Church practiced such conduct & that time would come when men would have more wives than one &c”¹⁹

The next day, September 4, 1842, “Esther Smith gave evidence that [the] defendant²⁰ told her that it was lawful for people to have illicit intercourse if they only held their peac[e] & ~~that the time would~~ it was agreeable to the practice of some of the leading men or heads of the Church.”²¹

April 8 1844 General Conference – Hyrum Smith gave a strongly anti-polygamy sermon. He makes it clear that he is only married to one woman and that no one can have more than one wife at a time. He calls the idea of multiple wives a "damn fool doctrine" and "if any brother hears any person preach such stuff wring his nose". To the sisters he says, "If I was a woman, and got so fooled I would hide my head.”

May 26 1844 Joseph Smith discourse (taken from *The Words of Joseph Smith*, Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook editors, (BYU Press 1980))–

“For the last three years I have a record of all my acts and proceedings, for I have kept several good, faithful, and efficient clerks in constant employ: they have accompanied me everywhere, and carefully kept my history, and they have written down what I have done, where I have been, and what I have said; therefore my enemies cannot charge me

¹⁷ *Id.*, pp. 414-415, as in original.

¹⁸ *Id.*, p. 417, as in original.

¹⁹ *Id.*, p. 424, as in original.

²⁰ Gustavius Hills.

²¹ *Id.*, p. 425, as in original.

with any day, time, or place, but what I have written testimony to prove my actions; and my enemies cannot prove anything against me. ...Matters of fact are as profitable as the Gospel, and which I can prove. You will then know who are liars, and who speak the truth I want to retain your friendship on holy grounds.

Another indictment has been got up against me. It appears a holy prophet has arisen up, and he has testified against me: the reason is, he is so holy. The Lord knows I do not care how many churches are in the world. As many as believe me, may. If the doctrine that I preach is true, the tree must be good. I have prophesied things that have come to pass, and can still.

...

I had not been married scarcely five minutes, and made one proclamation of the Gospel, before it was reported that I had seven wives. I mean to live and proclaim the truth as long as I can.

This new holy prophet has gone to Carthage and swore that I had told him that I was guilty of adultery. This spiritual wifeism! Why, a man dares not speak or wink, for fear of being accused of this.

William Law testified before forty policemen, and the assembly room full of witnesses, that he testified under oath that he never had heard or seen or knew anything immoral or criminal against me. He testified under oath that he was my friend, and not the 'Brutus.' There was a cogitation who was the 'Brutus.' I had not prophesied against William Law. He swore under oath that he was satisfied that he was ready to lay down his life for me, and he swears that I have committed adultery.

I wish the grand jury would tell me who they are—whether it will be a curse or blessing to me. I am quite tired of the fools asking me.

A man asked me whether the commandment was given that a man may have seven wives; and now the new prophet has charged me with adultery. I never had any fuss with these men until that Female Relief Society brought out the paper against adulterers and adulteresses.”

April 7, 1842—at a General Conference both Joseph and Hyrum Smith publicly deny Martha Brotherton’s story that church leaders, including Joseph, locked her in a room for several days to convince her about plural wives. The minutes relate that Hyrum’s comments were: “spoke in contradiction of a report in circulation about Elder Kimball, B. Young, himself, and others of the Twelve, alledging 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.” Joseph’s comments were: “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 would believe such lies, except [Thomas] Sharp the editor of the ‘Warsaw Signal.’”

April 10, 1842—Joseph wrote the following in his Journal: “I preached in the grove, and pronounced a curse upon all Adulterers and Fornicators, and unvirtuous persons and those who have made use of my name to carry on their iniquitous designs.”²²

March 7 - 20 1844 – Joseph presided at a meeting of “about eight thousand Saints” gathered at the temple where *A Voice of Innocence from Nauvoo* was read and all the people there assembled twice said “Amen.” The document was also reread at four consecutive meetings of the Relief Society (on March 9 and March 16) and then published in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* on March 20. This was done to “ascertain by vote, who would be willing to receive the principles of virtue, keep the commandments of God, and uphold the Presidents (Joseph and Hyrum) in putting down iniquity...” and strongly denounced “polygamy, bigamy, fornication, adultery, and prostitution...”²³

William McLellin was excommunicated for having sex with “a certain harlot” while on a mission. 14 months earlier, while preparing for his mission, he was warned by Joseph Smith in a revelation (D&C 66:10): “Commit not adultery—a temptation with which thou hast been troubled.”

Emma Smith denied plural wives was taught by Joseph:

“At one time my husband [Joseph] came to me and asked me if I had heard certain rumors about spiritual marriages, or anything of the kind;

²² Wilford Woodruff entered this in his journal about Joseph’s talk on April 10, 1842: “Joseph the Seer arose in the power of God— reproved and rebuked wickedness before the people in the name of the Lord God. He wished to say a few words to suit the condition of the general mass— and I shall speak with authority of the priesthood in the name of the Lord God, which shall prove a saviour of life unto life, or of death unto death. Notwithstanding this congregation profess to be Saints, yet I stand in the midst of all characters and classes of men. If you wish to go where 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, and drawing towards the devil. Yes I am standing in the midst of all kinds of people— Search your hearts, and see if you are like God. I have searched mine, and feel to repent of all my sins.— We have thieves among us, adulterers, liars, hypocrites. If God should speak from heaven he would command you not to steal, not to commit adultery, not to covet, nor deceive, but be faithful over a few things. As far as we degenerate from God, we descend to the devil, and lose knowledge; and without knowledge we cannot be saved, and while our hearts are filled with evil, and we are studying evil, there is no room in our hearts for good or studying good,— is not God good, then you be good, if he is faithful, then you be faithful. Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, and seek for every good thing. The Church must be cleansed, and 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 knowledge, and consequently more power, than many men who are on the earth. Hence it needs revelation to assist us, and give us knowledge of the things of God. What is the reason that the priests of the day do not get revelation? They ask only to consume it upon their lust,— their hearts are corrupt, and they cloak their iniquity by saying that there are no more Revelations. But if any revelations are given of God, they are universally opposed by the priests, and christendom at large, for it reveals their wickedness, and abominations. Many other remarks of interest were made.”

²³ The text of the announcement is included in the Appendix A to this paper.

and assured me that if I had, that they were without foundation; that there was no such doctrine, and never should be with his knowledge or consent. I know that he had no other wife or wives than myself, in any sense, either spiritual or otherwise.” (*Last Testimony of Sister Emma*, *The Saints Herald*, October 1, 1879)

“Do the Mormons believe in having more wives than one? No, not at the same time. But they believe, that if their companion dies, they have a right to marry again.” (Joseph Smith, *TPJS* 119, 8 May 1838)

To the extent Joseph exposed his thoughts about sex, they were dominated by sexual purity and self-control.²⁴ His public and private statements point to a man who prized chastity, fidelity and condemned promiscuity. His letters are consistent with his public statements. In an address to those present for a high council trial before the Nauvoo High Council on November 25, 1843, Joseph Smith declared:

“[G]ave an address tending to do away with every evil, and exhorting them to practice virtue and holiness before the Lord; told them that the Church had not received any permission from me to commit fornication, adultery, or any corrupt action; but my every word and action has been to the contrary. If a man commit adultery, he cannot receive the celestial kingdom of God. Even if he is saved in any kingdom, it cannot be the celestial kingdom.”²⁵

In the minutes of the High Council for November 21, 1843 it was Joseph Smith who brought the charges. He accused Elder Harrison Sagars of two offenses:

“1st. For trying to seduce a young girl, living in his house[,] by the name of Phebe Madison. 2nd. For using my name in a blasphemous manner, by saying that I tolerated such things in which he is guilty of lying &c &c. Joseph Smith.”²⁶

Joseph responded to the claim he authorized seduction of females by accusing those making the claim of “blasphemy.” At the trial he denounced he ever gave permission for fornication, adultery or any corrupt action. A false accusation against a prophet, when there is insufficient proof to remove all doubt of the accusation, is a grave offense. It offends the injured party, but also the one who sent Him as His messenger.

²⁴ Joseph’s August 18, 1842 letter to the parents of Sarah Ann Whitney has been represented as a love letter to her, instead of to her parents. He was in hiding, Emma Smith had encouraged him to change hiding places to avoid capture by Missouri hunters who wanted to capture and return him to Missouri. Emma also warned Joseph she was being followed. Joseph’s letter telling the Whitneys they ought to “find out when Emma comes then you cannot be safe, but when she is not here, there is the most perfect safty” directly related to Emma’s warning about Missouri spies following her.

²⁵ *DHC* 6:81.

²⁶ *The Nauvoo City and High Council Minutes*, John S. Dinger, editor, (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 2011), pp. 479-480.

In addition, there are many scriptures condemning multiple wives and concubines, including:

The revelation stating “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.” (T&C 35:5; LDS D&C 49:15–16; RLDS DC 49:3a–b)

The Book of Mormon’s many statements condemning polygamy (NC Jacob 1:4; LDS Jacob 1:15, NC Jacob 2:6; LDS Jacob 2:23-35, NC Jacob 2:11; LDS Jacob 3:5-7, NC Mosiah 7:1; LDS Mosiah 11:1-2,4,14) and declares monogamy as the means by which the Lord used to “raised up seed” unto himself (NC 1 Ne. 2:2; LDS 1 Nephi 7:1, NC 1 Ne. 5:2; LDS 1 Nephi 16:7-8 and NC Jacob 2:7; LDS Jacob 2:25). This passage has been reinterpreted to mean that, “if God needs to raise up seed, he’ll command polygamy” despite there being no historical precedent for that deviation.²⁷

Joseph Smith Jr. received a commandment warning against the desire of men to have a woman other than their singular wife: “Thou shalt love thy wife with all thy heart, and shalt 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. Thou shalt not commit adultery; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out.” (T&C 26:6; LDS D&C 42:22–23; RLDS DC 42:7d)

The Lord commanded faithfulness to lawful marriage in word, thought and deed: “verily I say unto you, as I have said before, he that looketh on a woman to lust after her, or if any shall commit adultery in their hearts, they shall not have the Spirit, but shall deny the faith and shall fear” (T&C 50:4; LDS D&C 63:16)

Joseph Smith’s translation of the KJV Bible corrected several Old Testament passages about David and Solomon’s polygamy, and reversing the meaning behind several misconceptions that David and Solomon were righteous in their efforts to “multiply wives unto themselves,” which was expressly forbidden for Kings of Israel to do under the law in Deuteronomy 17:15-17 (see JST versions of 2 Samuel 12:13, 1 Kings 3:14, 2 Kings 11:4). Additionally, Joseph Smith didn’t correct or restore any additional insights or instructions regarding polygamy, and left all New Testament references to monogamy unchanged (see Matthew 19:3-9, 1 Corinthians 7:2, 1 Timothy 3:2,12, and Titus 1:6)

²⁷ If “raising up seed” were the justification, then the absence of plural wives is conspicuous in the case of Adam & Eve (RE Genesis 2:14), their initial descendants (RE Genesis 3:1), Noah and Noah’s three sons (RE Genesis 5:15), Lehi (1 Ne. 1:7), Lehi’s monogamous sons (RE 1 Ne. 5:2), and many others.

The LDS church published the *Article on Marriage* in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine & Covenants, which states “Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again” (D&C 101 [1835 ed.] and 109 [1844 ed.]

The *Article on Marriage* was part of the scriptures in the 1840s and stated all marriages are to be done openly and publicly (never secretly) and according to laws and customs of the land in which they are performed. It states marriages should be approved only “if there be no legal objections” (polygamy was illegal in Ohio and Illinois). “According to the custom of all civilized nations, marriage is regulated by laws and ceremonies: therefore we believe, that all marriages in this church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, should be solemnized in a public meeting, or feast, prepared for that purpose” (D&C 101 [1835 ed.] and 109 [1844 ed.]

If you search for a contemporaneous private document or public declaration from Joseph, Hyrum or Emma Smith supporting plural wives you will find none. All of them were consistently publicly opposing the practice. And remember that the Book of Mormon commanded, “Woe unto the liar, for he shall be thrust down to hell.” *Supra*. Someone was lying. Therefore, someone will be thrust down to hell.

We all face a decision: We must choose to condemn Joseph, Hyrum and Emma Smith to hell, or we must condemn those they denounced as liars. As part of making that choice recall the words quoted earlier that were spoken to an imprisoned Joseph Smith: “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. And your people shall never be turned against you by the testimony of traitors[.]” *Supra*.

None of us should want to attribute to Joseph Smith lying and serious sexual sins if it is not true. I do not want to call him a liar without sufficient reason. If Joseph was a prophet of God, he should be entitled to only be convicted on the same standard we would convict a person of a serious crime. As a lawyer I know to convict someone of criminality, the burden of proof is “beyond any reasonable doubt.” If you have any reasonable doubt, you must not convict. I think a prophet of God is entitled to the same standard of proof. Therefore, if there is reason to doubt, I say we ought to doubt. We should say, ‘I cannot in good conscience conclude Joseph Smith was an adulterer and liar’—unless we have proof that removes all reasonable doubts on the subject. If the record is confused enough to tell two opposing stories, leaving us to write on it what is in our own heart, then I choose to write innocence for Joseph upon that page.

Both the apologists and critics now almost universally agree with the anti-Mormons about Joseph Smith. They claim Joseph Smith was a liar and deceiver. This judgment

has become nearly universal. But the contemporary records do not require that conclusion. Quite the contrary, the contemporary records vindicate Joseph as a truthful, honest and moral man. One of the things that frustrates me the most are the many accounts from those who claim to be faithful, believing Latter-Day Saints, who accept Joseph Smith as the prophet of the restoration, but require Joseph Smith to be dishonest and immoral. They insist Joseph Smith said one thing in public and another thing in private. Because they believe that a prophet of God can do that and can get away with it, it has created a malignancy on the LDS version of Mormonism. Even today the leaders of the LDS church believe God allows them to practice deceit because their version of Joseph Smith justifies it. This hypocrisy is embedded within the fundamentalist off-shoots from the LDS church. As one who has come to know God, I do not believe it possible to be a hypocritical liar, deceiving even your own wife (as it is claimed about Joseph), and have God's approval.

As we struggle with making the choice it becomes clear that the reliability and authenticity of the single document that ties Joseph Smith to introducing plural marriage (D&C 132) matters a great deal. We do not have an original. The first time the document was made public was in 1852. The text that was made public is in the handwriting of a practicing polygamist, Joseph Kingsbury. He was never a scribe of Joseph's. He was not trusted to maintain Joseph's journals or history. The original was lost or destroyed, and Kingsbury claimed that he copied it shortly after the original was written.

Kingsbury was one of the witnesses called to testify in at the Temple Lot case. Upon taking the stand, he, "refused to take the ordinary oath to 'tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth'". When later questioned about why he did this he stated:

"I do not swear to that; I affirm to it. To my mind there is a difference between swearing to anything and affirming to it...I generally affirm, and I suppose it is because my understanding is that a man cannot be convicted of perjury on an affirmation, and he can when he is sworn."

Abstract of Evidence Temple Lot Case U.S.C.C.,p 333

When asked if Joseph Smith practiced polygamy he stated: "I presume that he did"

James Whitehead was Joseph Smith's scribe during the last 2 years of Joseph's life and was also required to testify under oath in the Temple Lot case. His testimony included the following:

"I had a good opportunity of knowing if any such a thing [plural marriage] had been taught by the prophet or anyone else because I was there in his office and with him continually...I was well acquainted with his family and with his wife Emma and I never saw anything or heard of any such a thing being taught there in Nauvoo...When I lived at Nauvoo, I resided maybe three hundred yards from where Joseph

Smith's house was. I saw him there frequently, perhaps not every day but almost every day...Joseph Smith had one wife and her name was Emma; I do not know of any other woman who claimed to be the wife of the prophet, there at Nauvoo, nor at any other place.”

Abstract of Evidence Temple Lot Case U.S.C.C.

Wilford Woodruff then said on the stand in that same case:

“I never saw a copy of it [section 132] or the original during the lifetime of Joseph Smith. I do not think I saw the one that came here to Utah and purported to be a copy of the original.

I do not know whether the church of which I am the President has the purported copy or not.” *Abstract of Evidence Temple Lot Case U.S.C.C.*,p. 308.

Although written as part of a humorous account of his travels in the west, Mark Twain made this assertion from his visit to Salt Lake City: “Polygamy is a recent feature in the Mormon religion, and was added by Brigham Young after Joseph Smith's death. Before that, it was regarded as an ‘abomination.’”²⁸

I assume that if Joseph Smith opposed and denounced plural wives and Brigham Young introduced it that would matter to you. It certainly matters to me. Joseph Smith was not merely a prophet, but a dispensation head who laid a foundation upon which the rest of God's dealings with mankind will be predicated.

What you decide to be true about history is completely dependent upon the sources of information you trust. Almost all of the historical evidence for Joseph Smith introducing plural wives are not only created following Joseph and Hyrum's deaths, but more than a decade after they died.

The seven-volume set written by Arnold Boss, *The History of Plural Marriage Among the Mormon People*,²⁹ is an attempt to gather comprehensive evidence to support the practice of plural wives. It relies, as it must, on sources that did not exist on or before June 27, 1844. His sources in his extensive investigation are years, sometimes decades, later reflections by those who had begun to practice plural marriage publicly in 1852. Many of those sources did so privately before the public announcement in 1852. Once the practice was publicly taught and defended under Brigham Young, LDS historians have interpreted a good deal about Joseph by relying on Brigham Young and other defenders of plural marriage. To be fair, Joseph should be isolated from this subsequent development when trying to understand what Joseph believed, said and did.

²⁸ *Roughing It*, Mark Twain: Chapter 16, p. 115.

²⁹ Pioneer Publishing (Genola, Utah: 2008) copyright Nephi Boss.

Here is the problem in the clearest way I can put it: IF you accept the proof that existed on or before June 27, 1844 there is a single document which may have existed (or may have been created between then and 1852) to tie Joseph Smith to plural wives, but there is an overwhelming number of documents, public talks, scriptures, newspaper articles, church disciplinary proceedings, affidavits and public acts that clearly show Joseph Smith was opposed to and denounced plural wives. In this version Joseph was virtuous and truthful.

BUT IF you accept the record of those who practiced plural wivery, and accounts they wrote after Joseph and Hyrum's murders, then there is an overwhelming number of documents, talks, remembrances, affidavits and books that attribute the practice of secretly having plural wives by Joseph Smith while misleading the public with false denials. In this version Joseph was dishonest with his closest companions (including his wife), a public liar, a criminal under Illinois law, and therefore un-virtuous.

You get to choose. I suggest you choose carefully and consider the Lord's teaching: "Judge not unrighteously, that you be not judged, but judge righteous judgment; for with what judgment you judge, you shall be judged, and with what measure you mete, it shall be measured to you again." (RE Matt 3:40;

I assume, from what I have learned about our Lord's plans, that there will be some living the practice of plural wives who are gathered into Zion.³⁰ That presents a potential problem between those who are monogamous and those who are polygamous. It will be necessary for those who have plural wives to commit to: First, abandoning any effort to add another wife. Second, agree to teach your children that it must end with you and not be continued in the next generation. I tell you this in advance so you have no doubts about our expectations of you.

Historically, when plural wives have been permitted it is as if the women were married and the men were perpetually single. Because a man could add another wife, the men retained a "roving eye" to look out for any other woman who aroused his interest. The best example of the unmarried polygamist man was Parley P. Pratt. He took Eleanor McLean as his twelfth plural wife, although she was already married to Hector McLean. Hector was a drunken wife-beater, and Parley was, well, willing to continue adding wives. Hector caught Parley riding alone, shot him, took a knife to him, and left him bleeding on a farm in Arkansas. The farmer reported that after two

³⁰ The temple rites to be housed in the Lord's House will restrict the ceremonies to a man and one wife. However, from the direction received from the Lord thus far it is apparent that there will be some with more than one wife. The man and one wife will participate in the ceremony, but other wives will be permitted to be present while the rites take place and to learn and witness from the rites, thus informing them of the information while barring them from direct initiation.

and a half hours following Hector's handiwork Parley died from loss of blood. Brigham Young believed Parley deserved to die for adultery.³¹

There are always going to be tensions that will arise, and people will need to adapt across this barrier. I assume there will be some plural wives who envy women who are monogamous. I assume there will be some men who envy men who have multiple wives. I assume some children will envy those with fewer siblings and others who envy those with many siblings. And I assume there will be tension between these very different kinds of families. Everyone will have to make some adjustments to peacefully coexist in a community.

I do not belong to any organized church. I am part of a community bound together only by beliefs. To this point we only practice ordaining to priesthood, baptism by immersion, the sacrament of the Lord's supper, and laying on hands for blessing and healing. Only men hold priesthood, however, we believe Gifts of the Spirit are not confined to those who are ordained, but that anyone, male or female, can have all the various gifts given to people of faith.

Men are not sustained by men, but instead must be sustained by seven women, and if married one of those women must be his wife, in order to act as a priest outside his home. If a man holding the priesthood engages in inappropriate behavior, then it is a council of women who conduct discipline. The women's council is empowered to remove a man's certificate, which does not remove priesthood. It only prevents the man from ministering outside his home during a period of suspension. This is for the protection of the community of believers, so that no harm is done to the community

³¹ Parley P. Pratt and John Taylor performed plural marriages for each other in Winter Quarters while the rest of the Quorum of the Twelve were on the way to Utah in 1847. At the time, the church was governed collectively by the Quorum of the Twelve rather than a First Presidency. As such, Pratt believed that "one of them [the Twelve] by reason of age is the President of the Quorum and of the church . . . [but] all the 12 are alike in keys power might majesty & dominion." (Parley P. Pratt Discourse, May 23, 1847, General Church Minutes, CHL.) Thus, as an apostle, he believed he could perform polygamous marriages without the express permission of the president because he had equal authority to the president. Brigham Young disagreed—he accused Pratt and Taylor of adultery and declared that they had "committed an insult on the Holy Priesthood." ("Minutes of Councils, Meetings, & Journey," November 16, 1847. Cited in Gary James Bergera, *Conflict in the Quorum: Orson Pratt, Brigham Young, Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 58.) Their unauthorized sealings so incensed Young that after Pratt had been murdered while serving a mission in Arkansas ten years later, he stated that when "Bro. Parley's blood was spilt, I was glad for it for he paid the debt he owed, for he whored." (Historian's Office general Church minutes, 1839-1877; 1861-1877; 1865 May-September; Salt Lake City, 1865 May 1; Church History Library. Cited in John G. Turner, *Brigham Young: Pioneer Prophet* (Cambridge, Mass and London, England: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2012), 271.) The foregoing appears in, *There is never but one on the earth at a time* by Chad Nielsen, November 12, 2021.

by trusting in a man's status as priest to drop their guard and become vulnerable to mischief.

We collect tithes, but only on the amount remaining after all your family's obligations have first been paid. Then, what remains following payment of your obligations, is tithed on 1/10 of what is left. However, tithes are then distributed among the various fellowships based on the needs of the individuals and families for food, clothing, shelter, healthcare, transportation, and education. No one is paid, no one profits, only the needs of the poor among us are addressed with the tithes.

We plan to build a temple when the Lord commands. A fund for that purpose has been set up, and a group of women control that fund. Anyone can donate to that fund if they choose to do so.

We have an obligation to the descendants of Lehi, and have called and set apart individuals for that purpose. We have an obligation to the remnant of the Jews, and have been working for more than two years to have the Book of Mormon translated into Old Testament Hebrew. Although there are at least two modern-Hebrew translations, they are not of a quality that reflects the seriousness of the obligation imposed on us. We have some of the best Old Testament Hebrew scholars in the world working with us on the translation, and the project is now entering the final editing stage. It will be expensive to complete and publish, and those who have been supervising the effort wanted me to mention that anyone who is willing to do so can contribute to that effort. If you are interested in knowing more, go to the website hebrewbookofmormon.com and read about the project. Following publication of the Hebrew language version, we have those called by God and set apart to take the message to the remnant of the Jews.

We are not waiting for someone else to do the work required by the Lord. We have and are working to accomplish the work the Lord has given us. As part of that we have recovered and published a more correct version of the Book of Mormon than has been available before now. We have recovered and corrected revelations given to Joseph Smith. We have recovered and corrected the interpolations made in the Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible, including both the Old and New Testaments. Additions made by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints were removed, and many corrections Joseph made that had been omitted were added.

The scripture project was presented to and accepted by the Lord. It was then presented to and accepted by a conference of believers in 2017. They are now available in a high quality, leather bound version.

We invite all who are interested to labor alongside us. But we are more concerned with getting work accomplished than in building a hierarchy, or gaining authority over one another. Whatever influence I have in the group of believers I associate with is

solely because of my efforts to persuade people. I claim no office and have made no claim to have authority. If what I teach is true, then it should stand on its own.

We are busy and if you want to labor alongside us you are welcome to do so. I do not have time, with all the work left to accomplish, to engage in debate. I try to teach enough to let people decide. I claim to be the Lord's servant, and to teach what He directs. You need to decide whether that is true or not.

I can also warn you that **all** the churches of Mormonism, from the LDS to the Community of Christ, to the Fundamentalist Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and all the offshoots, including the pretenders who now seek to get a following by their pretended enlightenment; **all** of them are working at cross purposes to what the Lord is doing. If they, or you, want to please the Lord you will assist the labor we are performing. None else, and no-one else, are doing the Lord's work, vindicating His covenants, fulfilling His promises, and laboring alongside Him. We have a covenant from Him, given in 2017 that promises us His protecting hand. If you follow Christ as Lord, then you will support our work: for it is His work.

I believe the restoration has begun anew, and the heavens are open and communicating with us. There are resources available to investigate our claims. If you are interested and want to investigate this further, the following resources are available free on-line:

restorationarchives.com

scriptures.info

thetemplefund.net

bornofwater.org

learnofchrist.org

recordersclearinghouse.com

thetentalks.com

denversnuffer.com

hebrewbookofmormon.com

There are books I've written available through Amazon.com, however, essentially all of the content is available for free through the website "restorationarchives.com". Most of the talks I have given are or will be available on Youtube.com, including this one.

Following my excommunication from the LDS church I delivered a series of ten talks in 5 states. Those were recorded and can be heard at the thetentalks.com, restorationarchives.com, or on YouTube.com.

We will build a temple, when the Lord commands. We are and will continue to reach out to the remnant of the Lamanites. We will send authorized messengers to the remnant of the Jews. We hope to welcome the Lord at His return.

I tell you these things in the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.

APPENDIX A:

THE VOICE OF INNOCENCE FROM NAUVOO

The corruption of wickedness which manifested itself in such horrible deformity on the trial of O. F. Bostwick last week for slandering President Hyrum Smith and the widows of the city of Nauvoo, has awakened all the kindly feelings of female benevolence, compassion and pity, for the softer sex to spread forth the mantle of charity to shield the characters of the virtuous mothers, wives, and daughters of Nauvoo from the blasting breath and poisonous touch of debauchers, vagabonds and [?]akers, who have jammed themselves into our city to offer strange fire at the shrine of infamy, disgrace, and degradation: as they and their kindred spirits have done in all the great cities throughout the world, corrupting their ways on the earth, and bringing women, poor defenceless women, in wretchedness and ruin.

As such ignoble blood now begins to stain the peacable habitants of the saints, and taint the free air of the only city in the world that pretends to work righteousness in union, as the sine qua non, for happiness, joy, and salvation: and as such ungodly wretches, burning or smarting with the sting of their own shame, have doubtless, transported with them, some of the miserable dupes of their licentiousness, for the purpose of defiling the fame of this godly city: mildewing the honesty of our mothers, blasting the chastity of widows and wives, and corrupting the virtue of our unsuspecting daughters, it becomes us, in defence of our rights, for the glory of our fathers, for the honor of our mothers, for the happiness of our husbands, and for the welfare of our dear children, to rebuke such an outrage on the chastity of society: to thwart such a death blow at the hallowed marriage covenant: and to ward off such poisoned daggers from the hearts of our innocent daughters, for the honor of Nauvoo: and write with indellible ink upon every such villain: virtue perditorus! Beware of the wretch! and, so put in every virtuous woman's hand a rod, to scourge such tormentors of domestic felicity, with vengeance through the world: curse the man that preys upon female virtue! curse the man that slanders a woman! Let the righteous indignation of insulted innocence and virtue, spurn him from society: Let the dignity of the mothers of Israel kick the blood thirsty pimp from the pale of social communion. Let the widows and wives who tread in the footsteps of their queenly mother Eve, drive such fag ends of creation, as was Cain, to the land of Nod, and let the timid daughters of Nauvoo dread such CANKER WORMS more than the pestillence that walketh in darkness, and shun them as the serpent on the land and the shark in the sea. My God! My God! is there not female virtue and valor enough in this city to let such men die of the rot: - that the sexton may carry their putrid bodies beyond the limits of the city for food, for vultures, eagles and wolves. Refuse them female courtesy; deny them the pleasure of family correspondence and family intercourse; curse the woman that speaks to such rotten flesh, if she knows who they are; curse the man that will harbor them; and curse the lawyer that will stoop from the dignity of his profession to plead for them; The apologizer is as mean as the murderer!

Female virtue is a pearl of great price, and should glitter in the abodes of men, as in the mansions of bliss, for the glory and honor of him, whose image she bears and whose help meet she is, and every attempt of man to seduce that virtue, is, next to murder, a robbery that cannot be restored.

If woman swerves from the rules of righteousness 'Ruin ensues, reproach and shame; And one false step bedims her fame; In vain the loss she may deplore, In vain renew her life before' With tears she must in anguish be 'Till God says, 'set that captive free'

Many of the distinguished females of Nauvoo, have waded to their present habitations through persecution, sorrow, and death, robbed and insulted and bereaved of husbands and children by the combined powers, of priests, and spiritual wickedness in high places, but none of these piercing calamities of man touch the heart of woman with such severe poignancy, as the envenomed slander of O.F. Bostwick, that he could take a half bushel of meal, obtain his vile purpose, and get what accommodation he wanted with almost any woman in the city.

Wo to the wretch that can thus follow the blood stained mobbers of Missouri, in their hellish career, and deal his slander about the streets of Nauvoo, as he may imagine with impunity. Wo to the man or lawyer that filthifies himself by advocating such rotten hearted raven's rights, or recommends him to any but the sympathies of Satan.

Has any man a mother in this city? honor says clear such rubbish from her door. Has any many a wife? benevolence whispers, trap such beasts of the field that they may not worry the flock, nor kill the lambs. Has any man a widowed mother? humanity seems to caution him - thy mother is in danger, protect her, from the stench of such carrion. Has any man, daughters? the voice of reason compels him to exclaim: There is a wolf in the path, beware! Has any man, sisters? the blood of his kindred says, evil be to him that evil thinks: and let the whole virtuous female population of the city, with one voice, declare that the seducer of female chastity, the slanderer of female character, or the defamer of the character of the heads of the church, or the canker worms of our husband's peace: the prostitute, their pimps, whether in the character of elite, lawyer, doctor, or cicisbeo, shall have no place in our houses, in our affections, or in our society.

Wherefore,

Resolved unanimous, That Joseph Smith, the Mayor of the city, be tendered our thanks for the able and manly manner in which he defended injured innocence in the late trial of O.F. Bostwick for slandering President Hyrum Smith, and almost all the women of the city.

Resolved unanimously, That we view with unequaled disapprobation and scorn the conduct of any man or woman, whether in word or deed, that reflects dishonor upon the poor persecuted mothers, widows, wives and daughters of the Saints of Nauvoo; they have borne aspersions, slander and hardships enough; forbearance has ceased to be a virtue and retaliation, like the dagger or the bowl, ought to close the lips of such cowardly assassins.

Resolved unanimously, That while we render credence to the doctrines of Paul, that neither the man is without the woman; neither is the woman without the man in the Lord, yet we

raise our voices and hands against John C. Bennett's "spiritual wife system," as a grand scheme of profligates to seduce women; and they that harp upon it, wish to make it popular for the convenience of their own cupidity; wherefore, while the marriage bed, undefiled is honorable, let polygamy, bigamy, fornication, adultery, and prostitution, be frowned out of the hearts of honest men to drop into the gulf of fallen nature, 'where the worm dieth not and the fire is not quenched! and let all the saints say, Amen!

EMMA SMITH, Prest.

H. M. Ells, Sec. pro tem

APPENDIX B:

My attempt to edit Section 132 in December 2015 so it is not internally inconsistent. This was just an exercise in editorial speculation on whether it could be trimmed into a more credible, consistent and perhaps accurate version of the altered original. Ultimately, this attempt had to be abandoned and the section replaced altogether by a new revelation:

1 Verily, thus saith the Lord unto you my servant Joseph, that inasmuch as you have inquired of my hand to know and understand wherein I, the Lord, justified my servants Abraham, Isaac,³² and Jacob, as also Moses, David and Solomon, my servants, as touching the principle and doctrine of their having many wives and concubines—

2 Behold, and lo, I am the Lord thy God, and will answer thee as touching this matter.

3 Therefore, prepare thy heart to receive and obey the instructions which I am about to give unto you; for all those who have this law revealed unto them must obey the same.

4 For behold, I reveal unto you a new and an everlasting covenant; and if ye abide not that covenant, then are ye damned; for no one can reject this covenant and be permitted to enter into my glory.³³

5 For all who will have a blessing at my hands shall abide the law which was appointed for that blessing, and the conditions thereof, as were instituted from before the foundation of the world.³⁴

6 And as pertaining to the new and everlasting covenant, it was instituted for the fulness of my glory; and he that receiveth a fulness thereof must and shall abide the law, or he shall be damned, saith the Lord God.

7 And verily I say unto you, that the conditions of this law are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, of him who is anointed, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment through the medium of mine anointed, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (~~and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred~~), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead.

³² Isaac had only one wife, Rebecca.

³³ Official Declaration 1, the “Manifesto” would damn all the Latter-day Saints following its adoption (or the 1904 “Second Manifesto”), if this were true. The LDS church clearly teaches otherwise now.

³⁴ If this were true, then Adam and Eve violated the law, and taught their initial descendants to likewise violate the eternal law because they were married “two by two” in the first generations. It would make the descendants of Cain, the first murderer, the first to obey this order ordained before the foundation of the world.

8 Behold, mine house is a house of order, saith the Lord God, and not a house of confusion.

9 Will I accept of an offering, saith the Lord, that is not made in my name?

10 Or will I receive at your hands that which I have not appointed?

11 And will I appoint unto you, saith the Lord, except it be by law, even as I and my Father ordained unto you, before the world was?

12 I am the Lord thy God; and I give unto you this commandment—that no man shall come unto the Father but by me or by my word, which is my law, saith the Lord.

13 And everything that is in the world, whether it be ordained of men, by thrones, or principalities, or powers, or things of name, whatsoever they may be, that are not by me or by my word, saith the Lord, shall be thrown down, and shall not remain after men are dead, neither in nor after the resurrection, saith the Lord your God.

14 For whatsoever things remain are by me; and whatsoever things are not by me shall be shaken and destroyed.

15 Therefore, if a man marry him a wife in the world, and he marry her not by me nor by my word, and he covenant with her so long as he is in the world and she with him, their covenant and marriage are not of force when they are dead, and when they are out of the world; therefore, they are not bound by any law when they are out of the world.

16 Therefore, when they are out of the world they neither marry nor are given in marriage; but are appointed angels in heaven, which angels are ministering servants, to minister for those who are worthy of a far more, and an exceeding, and an eternal weight of glory.

17 For these angels did not abide my law; therefore, they cannot be enlarged, but remain separately and singly, without exaltation, in their saved condition, to all eternity; and from henceforth are not gods, but are angels of God forever and ever.

18 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife, and make a covenant with her for time and for all eternity, if that covenant is not by me or by my word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through him whom I have anointed and appointed unto this power, then it is not valid neither of force when they are out of the world, because they are not joined by me, saith the Lord, neither by my word; when they are out of the world it cannot be received there, because the angels and the gods are appointed there, by whom they cannot pass; they cannot, therefore, inherit my glory; for my house is a house of order, saith the Lord God.

19 And again, verily I say unto you, if a man marry a wife by my word, which is my law, and by the new and everlasting covenant, and it is sealed unto them by the Holy Spirit of promise, by him who is anointed, unto whom I have appointed this power and the keys of this priesthood; and it shall be said unto them: “Ye shall come forth in the first resurrection (and if it be after the first resurrection, in the next resurrection); and shall inherit thrones,

kingdoms, principalities, and powers, dominions, all heights and depths.” Then shall it be written in the Lamb’s Book of Life that he shall commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood. And if ye abide in my covenant, and commit no murder whereby to shed innocent blood, it shall be done unto them in all things whatsoever my servant hath put upon them, in time, and through all eternity. And it shall be of full force when they are out of the world. And they shall pass by the angels, and the gods, which are set there, to their exaltation and glory in all things, as hath been sealed upon their heads. Which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever and ever.

20 Then shall they be gods, because they have no end; therefore shall they be from everlasting to everlasting, because they continue; then shall they be above all, because all things are subject unto them. Then shall they be gods, because they have all power, and the angels are subject unto them.

21 Verily, verily, I say unto you, except ye abide my law ye cannot attain to this glory.

22 For strait is the gate, and narrow the way that leadeth unto the exaltation and continuation of the lives, and few there be that find it, because ye receive me not in the world neither do ye know me.

23 But if ye receive me in the world, then shall ye know me, and shall receive your exaltation; that where I am ye shall be also.

24 This is eternal lives—to know the only wise and true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent. I am he. Receive ye, therefore, my law.

25 Broad is the gate, and wide the way that leadeth to the deaths; and many there are that go in thereat, because they receive me not, neither do they abide in my law.

26 Verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man marry a wife according to my word, and they are sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, according to mine appointment, and he or she shall commit any sin or transgression of the new and everlasting covenant whatever, and all manner of blasphemies, and if they commit no murder wherein they shed innocent blood, yet they shall come forth in the first resurrection, and enter into their exaltation; but they shall be destroyed in the flesh, and shall be delivered unto the buffetings of Satan unto the day of redemption, saith the Lord God.

27 The blasphemy against the Holy Ghost, which shall not be forgiven in the world nor out of the world, is in that ye commit murder wherein ye shed innocent blood, and assent unto my death, after ye have received my new and everlasting covenant, saith the Lord God; and he that abideth not this law can in nowise enter into my glory, but shall be damned, saith the Lord.

28 I am the Lord thy God, and will give unto thee the law of my Holy Priesthood, as was ordained by me and my Father before the world was.

29 Abraham received all things, whatsoever he received, by revelation and commandment, by my word, saith the Lord, and hath entered into his exaltation and sitteth upon his throne.

30 Abraham received promises concerning his seed, and of the fruit of his loins—from whose loins ye are, namely, my servant Joseph—which were to continue so long as they were in the world; and as touching Abraham and his seed, out of the world they should continue; both in the world and out of the world should they continue as innumerable as the stars; or, if ye were to count the sand upon the seashore ye could not number them.

31 This promise is yours also, because ye are of Abraham, and the promise was made unto Abraham; and by this law is the continuation of the works of my Father, wherein he glorifieth himself.

32 Go ye, therefore, and do the works of Abraham; enter ye into my law and ye shall be saved.

33 But if ye enter not into my law ye cannot receive the promise of my Father, which he made unto Abraham.

34 God commanded Abraham, and Sarah gave Hagar to Abraham to wife. And why did she do it? Because this was the law; and from Hagar sprang many people. This, therefore, was fulfilling, among other things, the promises.

35 Was Abraham, therefore, under condemnation? Verily I say unto you, Nay; for I, the Lord, commanded it.

36 Abraham was commanded to offer his son Isaac; nevertheless, it was written: Thou shalt not kill. Abraham, however, did not refuse, and it was accounted unto him for righteousness.

37 Abraham received concubines, and they bore him children; and it was accounted unto him for righteousness, because they were given unto him, and he abode in my law; as Isaac also and Jacob did none other things than that which they were commanded; and because they did none other things than that which they were commanded, they have entered into their exaltation, according to the promises, and sit upon thrones, and are not angels but are gods.

38 David also received many wives and concubines, and also Solomon ~~and Moses my servants, as also many others of my servants, from the beginning of creation until this time; and in nothing did they sin save in those things which they received not of me.~~

39 David's wives and concubines were given unto him of me, by the hand of Nathan, my servant, and others of the prophets who had the keys of this power; and in none of these things did he sin against me save in the case of Uriah and his wife; and, therefore he hath fallen from his exaltation, and received his portion; and he shall not inherit them out of the world, for I gave them unto another, saith the Lord.

40 I am the Lord thy God, and I gave unto thee, my servant Joseph, an appointment, and restore all things. Ask what ye will, and it shall be given unto you according to my word.

~~41 And as ye have asked concerning adultery, verily, verily, I say unto you, if a man receiveth a wife in the new and everlasting covenant, and if she be with another man, and I~~

~~have not appointed unto her by the holy anointing, she hath committed adultery and shall be destroyed.~~

~~42 If she be not in the new and everlasting covenant, and she be with another man, she has committed adultery.~~

~~43 And if her husband be with another woman, and he was under a vow, he hath broken his vow and hath committed adultery.~~

~~44 And if she hath not committed adultery, but is innocent and hath not broken her vow, and she knoweth it, and I reveal it unto you, my servant Joseph, then shall you have power, by the power of my Holy Priesthood, to take her and give her unto him that hath not committed adultery but hath been faithful; for he shall be made ruler over many.~~

45 For I have conferred upon you the keys and power of the priesthood, wherein I restore all things, and make known unto you all things in due time.

46 And verily, verily, I say unto you, that whatsoever you seal on earth shall be sealed in heaven; and whatsoever you bind on earth, in my name and by my word, saith the Lord, it shall be eternally bound in the heavens; and whosoever sins you remit on earth shall be remitted eternally in the heavens; and whosoever sins you retain on earth shall be retained in heaven.

47 And again, verily I say, whomsoever you bless I will bless, and whomsoever you curse I will curse, saith the Lord; for I, the Lord, am thy God.

48 And again, verily I say unto you, my servant Joseph, that whatsoever you give on earth, and to whomsoever you give any one on earth, by my word and according to my law, it shall be visited with blessings and not cursings, and with my power, saith the Lord, and shall be without condemnation on earth and in heaven.

49 For I am the Lord thy God, and will be with thee even unto the end of the world, and through all eternity; for verily I seal upon you your exaltation, and prepare a throne for you in the kingdom of my Father, with Abraham your father.

50 Behold, I have seen your sacrifices, and will forgive all your sins; I have seen your sacrifices in obedience to that which I have told you. Go, therefore, and I make a way for your escape, as I accepted the offering of Abraham of his son Isaac.

~~51 Verily, I say unto you: A commandment I give unto mine handmaid, Emma Smith, your wife, whom I have given unto you, that she stay herself and partake not of that which I commanded you to offer unto her; for I did it, saith the Lord, to prove you all, as I did Abraham, and that I might require an offering at your hand, by covenant and sacrifice.~~

~~52 And let mine handmaid, Emma Smith, receive all those that have been given unto my servant Joseph, and who are virtuous and pure before me; and those who are not pure, and have said they were pure, shall be destroyed, saith the Lord God.~~

~~53 For I am the Lord thy God, and ye shall obey my voice; and I give unto my servant Joseph that he shall be made ruler over many things; for he hath been faithful over a few things, and from henceforth I will strengthen him.~~

~~54 And I command mine handmaid, Emma Smith, to abide and cleave unto my servant Joseph, and to none else. But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God, and will destroy her if she abide not in my law.~~

~~55 But if she will not abide this commandment, then shall my servant Joseph do all things for her, even as he hath said; and I will bless him and multiply him and give unto him an hundred-fold in this world, of fathers and mothers, brothers and sisters, houses and lands, wives and children, and crowns of eternal lives in the eternal worlds.~~

~~56 And again, verily I say, let mine handmaid forgive my servant Joseph his trespasses; and then shall she be forgiven her trespasses, wherein she has trespassed against me; and I, the Lord thy God, will bless her, and multiply her, and make her heart to rejoice.~~

~~57 And again, I say, let not my servant Joseph put his property out of his hands, lest an enemy come and destroy him; for Satan seeketh to destroy; for I am the Lord thy God, and he is my servant; and behold, and lo, I am with him, as I was with Abraham, thy father, even unto his exaltation and glory.~~

~~58 Now, as touching the law of the priesthood, there are many things pertaining thereunto.~~

~~59 Verily, if a man be called of my Father, as was Aaron, by mine own voice, and by the voice of him that sent me, and I have endowed him with the keys of the power of this priesthood, if he do anything in my name, and according to my law and by my word, he will not commit sin, and I will justify him.~~

~~60 Let no one, therefore, set on my servant Joseph; for I will justify him; for he shall do the sacrifice which I require at his hands for his transgressions, saith the Lord your God.~~

~~61 And again, as pertaining to the law of the priesthood—if any man espouse a virgin, and desire to espouse another, and the first give her consent, and if he espouse the second, and they are virgins, and have vowed to no other man, then is he justified; he cannot commit adultery for they are given unto him; for he cannot commit adultery with that that belongeth unto him and to no one else.~~

~~62 And if he have ten virgins given unto him by this law, he cannot commit adultery, for they belong to him, and they are given unto him; therefore is he justified.~~

~~63 But if one or either of the ten virgins, after she is espoused, shall be with another man, she has committed adultery, and shall be destroyed; for they are given unto him to multiply and replenish the earth, according to my commandment, and to fulfil the promise which was given by my Father before the foundation of the world, and for their exaltation in the eternal worlds, that they may bear the souls of men; for herein is the work of my Father continued, that he may be glorified.~~

~~64 And again, verily, verily, I say unto you, if any man have a wife, who holds the keys of this power, and he teaches unto her the law of my priesthood, as pertaining to these things, then shall she believe and administer unto him, or she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord your God; for I will destroy her; for I will magnify my name upon all those who receive and abide in my law.~~

~~65 Therefore, it shall be lawful in me, if she receive not this law, for him to receive all things whatsoever I, the Lord his God, will give unto him, because she did not believe and administer unto him according to my word; and she then becomes the transgressor; and he is exempt from the law of Sarah, who administered unto Abraham according to the law when I commanded Abraham to take Hagar to wife.~~

~~66 And now, as pertaining to this law, verily, verily, I say unto you, I will reveal more unto you, hereafter; therefore,³⁵ let this suffice for the present. Behold, I am Alpha and Omega.~~

³⁵ There was never more revealed about this, unless, of course, the Manifesto is regarded as that “more.” It discontinued the practice and made it unnecessary to continue.

APPENDIX C:

After it became apparent that Section 132 was questionable and riddled with contradictions, we inquired of the Lord and He directed us in 2017 to remove that altered document and replace it with the text below:

34. Marriage was, in the beginning, between one man and one woman, and was intended to remain so for the sons of Adam and the daughters of Eve, that they may multiply and replenish the earth. I commanded that there shall not any man have save it be one wife, and concubines he shall have none. I, the Lord your God, delight in the chastity of women, and in the respect of men for their wives.

35. Marriage was established at the beginning as a covenant by the word and authority of God, between the woman and God, the man and woman, and the man and God. It was ordained by my word to endure for ever. Mankind fell, but a covenant established by my word cannot fail, and therefore in death they were not to be parted.

36. It was my will that all marriages would follow the pattern of the beginning, and therefore all other marriages would be ordained as at the first. But fallen men refused my covenant, did not hearken to my word, nor receive my promise, and marriages fell outside my rule, disorganized and without me, therefore unable to endure beyond the promises made between the mortal man and the mortal woman, to end when they are dead.

37. Covenants, promises, rights, vows, associations, and expectations that are mine will endure, and those that are not cannot endure. Everything in the world, whether it is established by men, or by Thrones, or by Dominions, or by Principalities, or by Powers, that are not by my word and promise, shall be thrown down when men are dead and shall not remain in my Father's Kingdom. Only those things that are by me shall remain in and after the resurrection.

38. Marriage by me, or by my word, received as a holy covenant between the woman and I, the man and woman, and the man and I, will endure beyond death and into my Father's Kingdom, worlds without end. Those who abide this covenant will pass by the angels who are appointed, and enter into exaltation. Concerning them it shall be said, You shall come forth in the first resurrection, and if they covenant after the first resurrection, then in the next resurrection, and shall inherit in my Kingdom their own thrones, dominions, principalities, powers, all heights and depths, and shall pass by the angels to receive exaltation, the glory of which shall be a fullness, and a continuation of their posterity for ever.

39. Marriage is necessary for the exaltation of the man and woman and is ordained by me through the Holy Spirit of Promise, or in other words, by my covenant, my law, and my authority. Like the marriage in Eden, marriage is a sacrament for a sacred place, on holy ground, in my presence, or where the Holy Spirit of Promise can minister. But rebellion has kept mankind from inheriting what I ordained in the beginning, and therefore women and men have been left to marry apart from me. Every marriage established by me requires that I be part of the covenant for it to endure, for Endless is my name and without me the

marriage cannot be without end: for so long as I endure it shall also endure, if it is made by my word and covenant.

40. But know also that I can do my work at any time, for I have sacred space above, and can do my work despite earth and hell. The wickedness of men has not prevented my will, but only kept the wicked from what they might have received.

41. Whenever I have people who are mine, I command them to build a house, a holy habitation, a sacred place where my presence can dwell or where the Holy Spirit of Promise can minister, because it is in such a place that it has been ordained to recover you, establish by my word and my oath your marriages, and endow my people with knowledge from on high that will unfold to you the mysteries of godliness, instruct you in my ways, that you may walk in my path. And all the outcasts of Israel will I gather to my house, and the jealousy of Ephraim and Judah will end; Ephraim will not envy Judah and Judah will not provoke Ephraim.

42. And again I say to you, Abraham and Sarah sit upon a Throne, for he could not be there if not for Sarah's covenant with him; Isaac and Rebecca sit upon a Throne, and Isaac likewise could not be there if not for Rebecca's covenant with him; and Jacob and Rachel sit upon a Throne, and Jacob could not be there if not for Rachel's covenant with him; and all these have ascended above Dominions and Principalities and Powers, to abide in my Kingdom.

43. Therefore the marriage covenant is needed for all those who would likewise seek to obtain from me the right to continue their seed into eternity, for only through marriage can Thrones and Kingdoms be established.

APPENDIX D:

Sorting Things Out

We should be more interested in the truth than in just inspiring one another with stories that flatter us, or make us feel we are better than others. We cannot afford the luxury of thinking ourselves right when we believe an error. Promoting “faith” in errors is what the Book of Mormon calls “unbelief.” When we prize our errors and hold them as true when they are not, we dwindle in unbelief. This is a frequent occurrence throughout the Book of Mormon, and results in the inability to understand God’s word. (Mosiah 26: 1-3.)

We cannot afford to be popular. The price is too high. We cannot turn away from truth even when it causes us painful and difficult repentance. We must not shrink away from what is required to remove the scales from our eyes.

I thought I had said all I needed on the topic of plural marriage, but a friend has loaned me a copy of the multi-volume work of Arnold Boss on the history of plural marriage. It is apparent more needs to be said to make the matter clear. Therefore, I am going to return to the subject and history to clarify some things.

As far as I can determine, Arnold Boss is an honest man. I do not question his ability to record and report what he has recorded in his account. I accept his account of the interview in 1929 of Lorin C. Woolley, meaning that I trust the interview took place and that Arnold Boss accurately reported the contents of that interview. The defect does not lie with Arnold Boss, but in the account told by Lorin C. Woolley.

Assuming they are interested in the truth, I will lay this matter out in a series of posts that I think will be helpful to the Fundamentalist community. I have been acquainted with this event for over twenty years.

Here is the account given by Woolley in the interview recorded by Arnold Boss on September 22, 1929. I leave the punctuation and spellings as in the original. The “guard” speaking in the narrative is Lorin C. Woolley. He is relating to Arnold Boss the events that took place on the night of September 26-27, 1886 involving church president John Taylor. This is what purportedly occurred during the night of September 26-27, 1886:

That evening I was called to act as guard during the first part of the night, notwithstanding the fact that I was greatly fatigued on account of the three days trip I had just completed.

The brethren retired to bed soon after nine o’clock. The sleeping rooms were inspected by the guard as was the custom. President Taylor’s room had no outside door. The windows were heavily screened.

Sometime after the brethren retired and while I was reading the Doctrine and Covenants, I was suddenly attracted to a light appearing under the door leading to President Taylor’s room, and was at once startled to hear the voices of men talking there. There were three distinct voices. I was bewildered because it was my duty to keep people out of that room and evidently some one had entered without my knowing it. I made a hasty

examination and found the door leading to the room bolted as usual. I then examined the outside of the house and found all the window screens were intact. While examining the last window, and feeling greatly agitated, a voice spoke to me, saying, "Can't you feel the spirit? Why should you worry?"

At this I returned to my post and continued to hear the voices in the room. They were so audible that although I did not see the parties I could place their positions in the room from the sound of the voices. The three voices continued until about midnight, when one of them left, and the other two continued. One of them I recognized as President Taylor's voice. I called Charles Birrell and we both sat up until eight o'clock the next morning.

When President Taylor came out of his room about eight o'clock of the morning of September 27, 1886, we could scarcely look at him on account of the brightness of his appearance.

He stated, "brethren, I have had a very pleasant conversation all night with brother Joseph." (Joseph Smith) I said, "Boss, who is the man that was there until midnight?" He asked, "what do you know about it Lorin?" I told him all about my experience. He said, Brother Lorin, that was your Lord."

We had no breakfast, but assembled ourselves in a meeting. I forgot who opened the meeting. I was called to offer benediction. I think, my father John W. Woolley, offered the opening prayer. There were present at this meeting, In addition to President Taylor, George Q. Cannon, L. John Nuttal, John W. Wooley, Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, Charles Birrell, Daniel R. Bateman, bishop Samuel Sedden, George Earl, My mother Julia E. Woolley, my sister, Amy Woolley, and myself. The meeting was held from about nine o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon without intermission, being about eight hours in all.

President Taylor called the meeting to order. He had the manifesto, that had been prepared under direction of George Q. Cannon, read again. Then he put each person under covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or Plural marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle.

...

[I skip several pages to get to the part most important to the Fundamentalist movement:]

...

John Taylor set five apart and gave them authority to perform marriage ceremonies, and also to set others apart to do the same thing as long as they remained on earth; and while doing so the prophet Joseph Smith stood by directing the proceedings. Two of us had not met the prophet Joseph Smith in their mortal life, and we, Charles H. Wilkins and myself, were introduced to him and shook hands with him.

Because of what I know and what the scriptures relate, this account, though I believe faithfully recorded by Arnold Boss, is riddled with errors. Lorin C. Woolley has embellished the account, and his additions reveal the fraud. We will go through some of the many errors in a series of posts to show why it is false.

There is a principle important and binding on all of us: The things given us by the Lord should never be overstated. They should be given without embellishment, additions, or interpolations. They are not ours, but the Lord's. When He entrusts us with something (or anything), then it is our duty to faithfully perform and to keep everything within the bounds the Lord set. Our additions detract from the Lord's work. Joseph constantly understated his experiences. This is one of the signs he is telling us truth.

It is in the embellishment that Lorin C. Woolley reveals this is a dishonest account. And this event is critical for those who want to claim they can still practice plural marriage, because the authority has remained in the Fundamentalist groups.

Sorting Things Out, Part 2

This incident was to have occurred on September 27th of 1886, and L. John Nuttal was in attendance. He was the Secretary to the First Presidency at the time. His journal records the following for that date:

President Cannon still improving in his health. The rest of the party all well.
President Taylor signed several recommends. A letter was received from Elder F. D. Richards, enclosing one from Bro. E. W. Davis of the 17th Ward, in regard to his call as a missionary and needing help.
A letter was received from Bro. A. Miner dated Sept. 20th stating that he had perfected the reincorporation of Toole Stake Corporation.
A letter was received from Bro. Wm. M. Palmer at Council Bluffs September 22, 1886, giving an account of his labors to that time.
A letter was received from Sister Ellen Norwood Billingsley of Orderville.
A letter was written to Elder Enoch Farr, President, Sandwich Islands Mission, in answer to his letter received September 7th.
A letter was also sent to Bro. Thos. G. Webber of Z.C.M.I.
A letter was written to President W. Woodruff in reply to his letter received September 25th.
President Taylor pitched quoits a while this morning, also in the afternoon.
President Cannon in the home most all day; he sat out of doors awhile in the after part of the day.
Brother S. Bateman carried in our mail matter.

The reference to "pitching quoits" means a game. The game was much like horseshoes, where you throw a ring made of rope or metal trying to ring it around a stake. In other words, the purported meeting on this day, if it happened at the times reported in the Woolley interview, would have been outdoors, and would have included both morning and afternoon games played by president Taylor. There is no real harmony between the account retold in the Woolley interview and the Nuttal record for that date. The hours' long meeting in the one and the morning and afternoon games in the other are not describing the same day.

George Q. Cannon's diary for the same day likewise makes no mention of the purported meeting which Lorin Woolley describes.

On the chance the meeting occurred the day before and was misremembered, again, the diary of L. John Nuttal is void of any reference. The meeting that day is referred to as “our usual meeting” and did not begin until 2:30 in the afternoon. Thus the dating cannot be correct. Both George Q. Cannon and L. John Nuttal were faithful reporters, and would have taken note of anything like the incident which is described by Lorin Woolley.

What that means is the account in the interview has at least one error. When relying on something for so important a matter as holding “authority” to proceed with plural marriages, these details matter a great deal. So, it appears to me the memory of Lorin Woolley is not altogether reliable, but that is a small matter. An event absent from the records of the faithful recorders (First Presidency Secretary and Councilor) does not prove that nothing happened. To be clear, I do think something happened, but what happened was far less than the event as reported by Lorin C. Woolley.

The next matter I think inaccurate in the account is the “light appearing under the door leading to president Taylor’s room.” This is contrary to the way these things happen.

First, from scripture, the presence of a heavenly light is not visible to unintended third-parties. An audience with one man will leave another man standing right next to him without any notice or visible exposure to the heavenly light. This is true of Daniel, who alone saw the vision and his companions did not: Daniel 10: 7. It is true of the vision in Joseph Smith’s childhood bedroom, where others were also sleeping when the angel Moroni appeared. See JS-H 1: 30.

Second, this is not how the Vision of the Three Degrees of Glory was received. Section 76 was an open vision to Joseph and Sidney Rigdon, seen in the same room where about a dozen visitors were present. They did not see any light, or any portion of what Joseph and Sidney saw. The best account was given by Philo Dibble, reproduced in the *Juvenile Instructor* 27 (May 15, 1892) 303-04, which states in relevant part:

The vision which is recorded in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants [D&C 76] was given at the house of “Father Johnson,” in Hiram, Ohio, and during the time that Joseph and Sidney were in the spirit and saw the heavens open, there were other men in the room, perhaps twelve, among whom I was one during a part of the time— probably two-thirds of the time,—I saw the glory and felt the power, but did not see the vision.

The events and conversation, while they were seeing what is written (and many things were seen and related that are not written,) I will relate as minutely as is necessary.

Joseph would, at intervals, say: “What do I see?” as one might say while looking out the window and beholding what all in the room could not see. Then he would relate what he had seen or what he was looking at. Then Sidney replied, “I see the same.” Presently Sidney would say “what do I see?” and would repeat what he had seen or was seeing, and Joseph would reply, “I see the same.”

This manner of conversation was repeated at short intervals to the end of the vision, and during the whole time not a word was spoken by any other person. Not a sound nor motion made by anyone but Joseph and Sidney, and

it seemed to me that they never moved a joint or limb during the time I was there, which I think was over an hour, and to the end of the vision. Joseph sat firmly and calmly all the time in the midst of a magnificent glory, but Sidney sat limp and pale, apparently as limber as a rag, observing which, Joseph remarked, smilingly, "Sidney is not used to it as I am."

If Woolley was not invited into the vision (and his account makes clear he was not invited to participate), then this detail of seeing the heavenly light does not belong in an authentic narrative. It is a detail that, in my view, has been added to embellish the account and make it seem more believable. However, to me it makes the account less believable.

My own experience also tells me it is not trustworthy. The Lord was with me in the Draper Temple recently, and no one present had any idea what transpired nor beheld a thing of what happened there. An interloper does not behold glory, nor participate in such things. The retelling by Woolley, however, makes the mistake of embellishing with the very kind of detail that is incorrect.

This detail, therefore, makes the account less authentic to me, not more. Whatever happened with president Taylor involving the claim he gave the power to seal plural marriages to the "five men" did not, could not, have involved an interloper beholding a heavenly light shining under a closed door. The light of heaven is not natural, coarse or physical. To behold it you must be invited in, and if not invited in you are left without any vision, or knowledge of its presence.

Be careful what tales you trust. There are more problems with Lorin Woolley's account, which we will continue to discuss...

Sorting Things Out, Part 3

In addition to the "light" there is the problem of the "three voices." The fact is that angels do not vibrate the air with vocal chords in order to communicate. They "speak" into the mind of the person they address. This is why there are two different quotes of the John the Baptist by Joseph and Oliver. Both of them "heard" him speak. But the "speaking" was into the mind of these two individuals. The communication "spoken" by John the Baptist was of intelligence, conveyed from the mind to the mind.

Joseph quoted John the Baptist as saying:

"Upon you my fellow servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer the Priesthood of Aaron, which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; and this shall never be taken from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness." (JS-H 1: 69.)

Oliver quoted John the Baptist as saying: "Upon you my fellow-servants, in the name of Messiah, I confer this Priesthood and this authority, which shall remain upon the earth, that the Sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness." (JS-H footnote.)

For Joseph it was “the Priesthood of Aaron” and for Oliver it was “this Priesthood.” The concept is identical, the words, however, are not.

For Joseph it was “which holds the keys of the ministering of angels, and the gospel of repentance, and of baptism by immersion for remission of sins” and for Oliver it was “this authority.” Again, these are the words they used to convey the communication which came into their minds. Identical in substance, different in language. It is one of the evidences they were telling about an authentic event.

For Joseph it was “this shall never be taken from the earth until the sons of Levi do offer again an offering unto the Lord in righteousness” and for Oliver it was “which shall remain on the earth, that the Sons of Levi may yet offer an offering unto the Lord in righteousness.”

These differences are the result of each converting into our language the thoughts or intelligence which came from the angel. Angels do not vibrate the air. They “speak” otherwise, in thought – mind to mind.

Similarly, none of those who occupied the same room, even the same bed as Joseph the night of the Angel Moroni’s visit heard anything. No one was awakened during the all-night repetitious lectures to Joseph by the Angel. No one else in the room heard anything. Only silence.

So in the embellished and untrue account of Lorin Woolley he adds a detail about the “voices of three men” coming from inside the room in an attempt to add credibility to the account. It doesn’t. It shows something has been added that did not happen. Details matter. From this I can say he lacks knowledge and experience in contact with angelic ministers.

Putting Joseph Smith into this setting as one of the “three voices” is additionally problematic.

It is also a questionable detail that the guard placed for the inside door would abandon his post and go outside to inspect the window screens. I assume he added this detail to insure the “credibility” of the appearance inside the room through miraculous means. Apparently the creator(s) of the account did not want to trust the lighting effect alone, but wanted to add a miraculous component to the arrival of Christ and Joseph Smith as well. Because as any skeptic would conclude, if they had broken open the exterior window screens to enter, I suppose we would not believe it was Christ or Joseph Smith.

I also note the morning-time glow of president Taylor in the account. This brightness which was difficult to look upon is akin to Moses’ descent from the mount, and designed to furnish that same sense of awe and holiness to the affair. I would think if that were the case, we would have something in the George Q. Cannon or L. John Nuttall diaries about the incident.

Sorting Things Out, Part 4

The part of the account where President Taylor puts those who were present under covenant to obey the principle of plural marriage seems authentic. That was why he was in

hiding, after all. He left public view and presided over the church in exile, risking arrest if found.

He sacrificed a great deal to retain the principle of plural marriage. I think that did happen, or could have happened because it is entirely consistent with the events underway at the time.

His denunciation of the “manifesto” also seems authentic to me. His motto was “the kingdom of God or nothing” and he proved himself willing to suffer for a cause he believed to be true. He refused to compromise with the Federal Government, and his refusal was known, public and held to his core. So putting people under a covenant to recommit them to resist, as he was doing by example, seems authentic. It requires no embellishment.

But there is a part of the story I left out of the account. I will mention it only in general terms, as I consider the specifics sacrilege. Those who are Fundamentalist are familiar with it. It involves President Taylor, while denouncing the manifesto, rising from the floor, levitating in the air about a foot off the ground, making certain gestures, and reciting an oath very similar in content to the first Temple covenant penalty in place in 1886.

This addition is designed to add terrible significance to the denunciation. It is to inspire awe and terror in the mind of the listener/reader, but it is entirely out of place. The idea that you needed to add a Temple sign and penalty component to the denunciation of the manifesto is too strange to attribute to President Taylor. It doesn't fit. It seems to me altogether as an embellishment put into the account in order to make the event seem more holy, more sacred and therefore more trustworthy. It does the opposite. Details like these do not belong in the account. They detract. They suggest someone is afraid they won't be believed if they tell the story the way it was. It falls apart to my mind because it takes far too much upon itself.

This leads in turn to another addition to supplement the account which also lacks scriptural support: The appearance of Joseph Smith as the slain, hand-shaking, disembodied Prophet. This detail is added, I assume, because there was concern that unless the event was tied directly to Joseph Smith some people would resist acknowledging the authority.

However, disembodied spirits do not “shake hands.” (D&C 129: 6-7.) Joseph's presence and hand-shaking, like the other added embellishments, are necessary to put the whole thrust of the story over. The purpose is to put into the hands of five men the ability to freelance in sealing plural marriages.

Here, then, is the nub of the whole story: “John Taylor set five apart and gave them authority to perform marriage ceremonies, and also to set others apart to do the same thing as long as they remained on the earth[.]” This is critical for what the Fundamentalists want to justify. They must have this in order to be able to claim post-John Taylor and post-Manifesto marriage sealings were authorized and authoritative.

First, to be clear: I think John Taylor did give authority to these five men to seal other plural marriages. In the time and setting, it makes absolute sense. They were sealing outside of the Temples, and this was being done by the highest church authorities. There is every reason to believe the difficulties of avoiding Federal prosecution tipped in favor of giving authority for

others to move plural marriage sealings forward. Just like today there are others who seal marriages in addition to the church President.

HOWEVER, –and this is the problem in the account which nagged the telling of this tale and required its embellishment– this kind of delegation won't work to perpetuate the practice indefinitely. Even if President Taylor wanted to extend his reach and allow other men to be sealers during his underground days, it won't work once President Taylor died. Their commission is entirely dependent upon the delegation by President Taylor, and cannot run independent from him. When he died, their commission needed to be renewed by President Woodruff. When it wasn't, then their commission ended.

This is because of the very revelation upon which Fundamentalist doctrine is grounded: Section 132. In Section 132 the power to seal is consolidated in but one man at a time, “and there is never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred” according to the revelation establishing the very doctrine they defend. (D&C 132: 7.) If this was John Taylor when the sealing authority was given, then the one man who could authorize it was John Taylor. When he died, the one man would have been Wilford Woodruff. You can't, in any event, have “five set apart and given authority” who would later rival Wilford Woodruff's claim to the position. That alone is contrary to the order in Section 132. This has been discussed in Beloved Enos. The claims are unscriptural and indefensible.

This scriptural impediment to the claim is the very reason we see added the light under the door, the three voices, the levitating and sacrilegious oath pronouncing President Taylor, and the disembodied Joseph Smith shaking hands and presiding over the affair. They are added, though they could not possibly have happened in that way, precisely to overcome the scriptural impediment to the authority claimed by Fundamentalists to be able to continue to seal plural marriages.

I disbelieve the account, though I do not question whether President Taylor gave the ability to seal to other men in order to overcome Federal harassment at the time he was president. But that delegation ended with his death.

To now have various pretenders all claiming they can track back to John Taylor and one of these five men their “line of authority” to seal plural marriages is a deception. There is only one man at a time who can do this. Even the church now disclaims they can perform such rites.

Sorting Things Out, Part 5

The reason this whole topic of plural marriage has assumed cosmic meaning in the minds of our Fundamentalist brothers and sisters is because of Brigham Young's advocacy of this while leading the church. Brigham Young is a pretty thin reed to lean upon when it comes to doctrine, and I mean any doctrine. His utility to the Lord did not include his ability to teach, but his ability to lead, colonize and organize. He was a genius in these areas. Doctrinally, however, he has proven to be problematic.

Inside the church, he has been referred to as a man whose statements were “made in the absence of revelation.” His position on priesthood ban for those of African blood has been denounced and abandoned. His teachings on plural marriage have been abandoned. His doctrine of Adam-God has been called a “false theory.” His doctrine of annihilation of the spirits of evil beings has been renounced. However, Fundamentalists do not respect the same tradition as those who are faithful LDS members. Therefore, for those who stake their salvation on his teachings, I want to use Brigham Young’s own words to help them see how thin a reed they lean on for establishing the central importance of plural marriage for exaltation.

Brigham Young’s ordination to the apostleship was “not complete” according to those who ordained him, “till God has laid His hands upon [him]. We require as much to qualify us as did those who have gone before us; God is the same. If the Savior in former days laid His hands upon His disciples, why not in the latter days?” (DHC 2: 196.) Twenty-four years later he informed the saints this had not happened. He thought that perhaps “when [he] had lived to be as old as was Moses when the Lord appeared to him, that perhaps I then may hold communion with the Lord.” (JD 7: 243.) In 1863 he reaffirmed that no such visit had taken place, but he still hoped if he lived to be eighty it might. (JD 10: 23.) So, although he held the apostleship as an office in the church, his ordination to that office was conditioned on an event he explained had not been consummated by the Lord’s confirming ordination. How much confidence should that give you when considering his teachings?

He hesitated to call himself a “prophet, seer and revelator,” but allowed others to associate those titles with him:

“[After putting the motion for himself to be sustained as ‘Prophet, Seer, and Revelator,’ the President remarked:] I will say that I never dictated the latter part of that sentence. I will make the remark, because those words in that connection always made feel as though I am called more than I am deserving of. I am Brigham Young, an Apostle of Joseph Smith, and also of Jesus Christ. If I have been profitable to these people, I am glad of it. The brethren call me so; and if it be so, I am glad.” (*The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 3, p. 1347.)

He explained he was not a visionary man: ” I am not going to interpret dreams; for I don’t profess to be such a Prophet as were Joseph Smith and Daniel; but I am a Yankee guesser[.]” (*The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 3, p. 1306.) He considered himself “called of Joseph” and not of the Lord: “I do not want to skip Joseph, Peter, Jesus, Moses and go to my Father in Heaven. All I ask for is to be guided by the spirit of Joseph, then let others be governed by their head, or priesthood. Joseph enjoyed the privileges which I never thought I had. Joseph was called of God. I was called of Joseph.” (*The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 2, p. 1108.) Is being “called of Joseph” a sufficient basis for you to trust the man with your eternal salvation?

Even when Joseph gave him the assignment to finish the Temple rites, he remained uncertain about how this would be accomplished. Ultimately, he concluded that whatever he did would be fixed by the resurrected Joseph Smith during the Millennium:

“After Joseph comes to us in his resurrected body he will more fully instruct us concerning the Baptism for the dead and the sealing ordinances. He will

say be baptized for this man and that man and that man be sealed to that man and such a man to such a man, and connect the Priesthood together. I tell you their [sic] will not be much of this done until Joseph comes. He is our spiritual Father. Our hearts are already turned to him and his to us. This [is] the order of the Holy Priesthood and we shall continue to administer in the ordinances of the kingdom of God here on Earth.” (*The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 2, p. 1034.)

Temple rites would require Joseph, not President Young, to fix the seals.

On matters affecting eternal salvation, I would not rely on a “Yankee guesser” who considered himself “called of Joseph” and not called of Christ, to give you what you need for salvation. As I have explained in *Passing the Heavenly Gift* and this blog, his insistence on plural marriage as a condition of being saved is not warranted by the language of Section 132.

Brigham Young explained how church leadership was not affected by who held office. His theory was that anyone could be elected, and as long as the followers prayed for them things would go perfectly:

“Take any man in this kingdom, and if the people say that they will make him a President, or a Bishop, or elect him to fill any other office, and the faith of the people is concentrated to receive light through that officer or pipe laid by the power of the Priesthood from the throne of God, you might as well try to move the heavens as to receive anything wrong through that conductor. No matter whom you elect for an officer, if your faith is concentrated in him through whom to receive the things which he is appointed to administer in, light will come to you. Let a presiding officer or a Bishop turn away from righteousness, and the Lord Almighty would give him the lock-jaw, if he could not stop his mouth in any other way, or send a fit of numb palsy on him, so that he could not act, as sure as the people over whom he presided were right, that they might not be led astray.” (*The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, Vol. 3, p. 1379, November 29, 1857; the talk can also found at JD Vol. 6 beginning on p. 93.)

Of course, this theory did not work. As an example, Bishop Warren Snow was elected to be Bishop in Manti, but was involved in stealing tithing. Brigham Young sent traveling Bishop A. Milton Musser, then also Orson Hyde, to review records. They found between \$5,000 and \$8,000 of tithing missing, a substantial sum in those times.

Though he explained this theory, I do not think Brigham Young believed it at all. Had he believed it, he would not have challenged Sidney Rigdon’s claims to lead following the deaths of Joseph and Hyrum. If “any man in this kingdom” could lead, then why not Sidney? If “light will come to you” through any such man, then why not Sidney? The argument was between Sidney (who claimed revelation) and Brigham Young (who claimed to have “keys”). As a result, the debate required the church to choose between Sidney’s claims based on revelation and accept Brigham Young’s administrative “keys” as the source. Brigham Young’s leadership theory (that anyone could lead if prayed for by the membership) would have allowed the church to have both if Sidney were sustained. But Brigham Young’s insistence on having control in his quorum forced a vote by the Nauvoo Saints. The vote

resulted in abandoning revelation in favor of administrative “keys” –a choice which has affected church history ever since.

This initial vote established power in the Twelve, but within three years Brigham Young found it cumbersome. He had trouble getting consensus, and John Taylor and Parley Pratt opposed him on many issues. On December 1849 he got another vote making him church president and allowing him to organize the First Presidency, an easier administrative group to control.

Once Hyrum and Joseph died, and Brigham Young succeeded in getting elected as church President, the church operated under his leadership for nearly three decades. President Taylor’s entire presidency was in exile, avoiding Federal prosecution. Wilford Woodruff compromised on the plural marriage teaching for statehood, and his presidency was thereafter affected by debate about the propriety of that decision and what it meant for the church.

It was not until the 1900’s that the church was not in the grip of a conflict brought about by Brigham Young’s presidency and teachings. By that time the mold had been set, and the form put into that mold had hardened. It doesn’t matter whether you consider yourself “Fundamentalist” or mainstream, we are all caught inside the pattern established by the Yankee guesser and the immediate aftermath. Do you want to trust your eternal welfare to him? Do you trust that man so much that you will allow his pattern to control your belief in the restoration?

I think the church has reacted poorly to the dilemma created by this man’s teachings. They have denounced his major contributions, and have cast aside many other of his teachings and practices. Those who have remained devoted to these doctrines believe what they hold dear came from a reliable source. But remember, even he rejected the idea he was a “Prophet, Seer and Revelator” because he was only an apostle of Joseph’s. The church was right to say recently that he spoke “in the absence of revelation” because that is what he did.

The mistake Fundamentalists have made is not in believing in the system, but in trusting a man. He is no more worthy of your confidence than Lorin C. Woolley. The revelation you trust is carefully composed, and defines “the eternal marriage covenant” as between one man and one wife. That is all you need for exaltation. Brigham Young’s excesses on this matter are no more trustworthy than the value of another Yankee guesser. He did what he understood. But his understanding is and was flawed. This is why the church has rejected his teachings on the core of his beliefs: plural marriage, Adam-God, priesthood ban, potential annihilation of damned souls, blood atonement, kingdom of God as earthly institution, etc. There are good reasons for the doctrinal disfavor between him and the same church he led for three decades. Turning to Lorin C. Woolley to preserve Brigham Young’s legacy is not improving your state. It is modeling a flawed model.

Despite this, to his credit, Brigham Young never invented visitations, claimed more for himself than that he was a “good hand to have around” and denied he was visited by the Lord. These statements reflect a great deal more credit on Brigham Young than the embellishments made by Brother Woolley reflect on him.

I do not fault Fundamentalists for these problems. They were created by the elected President successor to Joseph and Hyrum. He held the office, and he taught what he taught. But that does not make him right before God. Members of the LDS church should be the first to have charity for this circumstance. We should be willing to forgive this devotion to Brigham Young's teachings because they originated with a man who was, after all, elected to lead the church for three decades. The church refused to abandon wives when it abandoned plural marriage, and Fundamentalists who would return should not be required to tear apart their families. They should reject the doctrine, and stop teaching it to their children. But the church is so very sensitive about this issue that we don't share the same attitude.

I personally believe this problem is cured by ceasing the practice, but leaving existing families intact. I believe those who do this will be welcomed in Zion, but those who continue to advocate and insist this is fundamental to salvation itself, I don't think will be welcomed. The conditions that are required to allow it are not met, and cannot be met by the Fundamentalists. They should recognize this and repent.