

## Chapter 5

### Apostle Pratt's Revolt against the Prophet

When Orson Pratt returned to Nauvoo during the second week of July 1841, he found a problem in progress at the highest level of Church government, which soon mushroomed into a tremendous controversy. To summarize the events, it should be noted that President Joseph Smith and other Church leaders were charging Sarah Pratt of adultery with Assistant Church President John C. Bennett. Bennett and Sarah, on the other hand, countered by telling Orson that they were innocent and that Joseph was a polygamist who had tried to make Sarah “one of his spiritual wives.” Orson chose to believe them and not Joseph, and Orson and Bennett remained close friends—Bennett even boarded with the Pratts for a time.

The problem smoldered for ten months—until Dr. Bennett and his clique were found to be practicing spiritual wifery in the spring of 1842, as related in a previous chapter, and the hand of fellowship was withdrawn from Bennett on May 11 of that year. Apostle Pratt refused to sign Bennett's expulsion notice. When the wicked doctor realized that his influence in Nauvoo was ended, he sought revenge by publicly proclaiming that Joseph was teaching and practicing polygamy in secret. He went to Carthage the first of July 1842, and began writing his infamous six letters which were published in the *Sangamo Journal*, Springfield, Illinois, beginning July 7.

Before Bennett left Nauvoo, Orson Pratt was aware that the doctor was going to publish that Joseph had attempted to make Sarah his plural wife. Orson apparently agreed to support Bennett's claim when the scandal should become public. Consequently, Orson opposed Joseph openly when he and Joseph de-

bated the subject in a special meeting in the Grove near the Temple on July 22. The controversy between the two continued openly through the summer, with Orson and Sarah being excommunicated from the Church in August and not reinstated until January 1843.

The following documentation supports these details:

### **Joseph and Orson's Conflict**

The Mormon Church has erroneously proclaimed that the difficulty between Joseph and Orson arose in 1841–1842 because Orson came home from Europe to find that Joseph had introduced the order of celestial marriage into the Church. This theory is false. The truth is that Joseph and Orson's differences occurred because Joseph condemned polygamy and denied any connection with it, and Sarah wished to cover up her affair with Bennett. It is evident that Sarah wished to save her marriage and her standing in the Church and community, and Bennett wished to keep his positions in the Church, city, and state offices. Since Joseph was leading the process of disciplining them, they could only keep their positions if they destroyed his character and influence.

Years later, when referring to his dispute with Joseph, Orson admitted that he had received his information from a wicked source. While speaking before an RLDS congregation at Plano, Illinois, in 1878, Orson

Referred to his own trial in regard to this matter [plural marriage] in Nauvoo, and said it was because he got his information from a wicked source, from those disaffected. (Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record* 6 [Salt Lake City, Utah, May 1887]: 230)

Of course, those who were disaffected were Sarah Pratt and the promiscuous Dr. Bennett.

During the ten months between July 1841 and May 1842, the problem between Joseph and Orson smoldered. The problem was discussed a number of times, without an agreement. Dr. Bennett made a statement about one of Joseph and Orson's discussions. He wrote:

Joe lied to Colonel [Orson] Pratt afterwards, IN THE NAME OF THE LORD. This shook his [Orson's] faith, and he told the Prophet to his face that *he was a liar*, AN INFAMOUS LIAR; and his noble voice has since been heard thundering against that Uncircumcised Philistine [Joseph], the fell Monster of Iniquity, and that at the very portals of the Temple. (John C. Bennett, *The History of the Saints; or, An Exposé of Joe Smith and Mormonism*, 232)

Although Bennett wrote the above to discredit Joseph, it confirms that the deep animosity between the two was generated by the Sarah Pratt case. It also shows that Joseph again denied the charges that he was a polygamist.

### **Apostles Confirmed There Was a Conflict**

In later years some of the apostles who had been at Nauvoo, and had later followed Brigham Young to Utah, mentioned that Orson believed Sarah and rejected Joseph's declaration of innocence. Brigham Young recorded:

He said he would believe his wife in preference to the Prophet. Joseph told him if he did believe his wife and follow her suggestions, he would go to hell. (*Succession in the Priesthood*, "History of Brigham Young," 19)

John Taylor commented concerning Orson's attitude:

His feelings were very bitter towards the Prophet Joseph Smith and others. (*Succession in the Priesthood*, "A Discourse by President John Taylor, Delivered At the Priesthood Meeting held in the Salt Lake Assembly Hall, Friday Evening, October 7, 1881," 18)

Wilford Woodruff wrote in his journal:

Dr. John Cook Bennett was the ruin of Orson Pratt. (Elden J. Watson, *The Orson Pratt Journals*, 180)

### **Orson Pratt Agreed to Openly Support Bennett's Story**

According to a letter dated July 8, 1842, from William M.

Allred (Orson's brother-in-law) to Dr. Bennett, Orson knew in advance about Bennett's forthcoming Second Letter—which contained the charge that Joseph had tried to seduce Sarah. Allred wrote:

“Doctor Bennett:

“Dear Friend,—

“Orissa's health is yet in a very critical situation. . . . We wish you to write your prescription in full, and send it to Sarah's [Prof. Orson Pratt's,—Sarah M. Pratt being the sister of Mrs. Orissa A. Allred.] where we shall remain until Orissa recovers. *We All, with one accord, send you our best respects.* Mr. Pratt would write, but he is *afraid to*. He wishes to be *perfectly still*, until your second letter comes out. . . . William M. Allred.” (Bennett, *History of the Saints*, 46; brackets in original text)

This statement that Orson would be “*perfectly still*, until your second letter comes out” is very significant. It shows that Orson knew in advance that Bennett was going to publish his Second Letter, and then he would publicly oppose Joseph.

### **Apostle Orson Pratt Disappeared**

Orson's decision to publicly support the accusations of Bennett and Mrs. Pratt against Joseph must have been a traumatic one for the apostle, who had spent so much time and effort in promoting the Church and the Gospel. Orson knew that Bennett's charge involving Sarah was to be printed in the July 15 issue of the *Sangamo Journal*, so when that day arrived he was greatly disturbed. In order to make a last-minute appraisal of the matter, he left his home and wandered south from Nauvoo along the bank of the Mississippi River, seeking to muster the courage to make his decision final. Early that July fifteenth morning, Joseph received a report that Orson had disappeared. It was feared that he had committed suicide. The LDS history quotes Joseph:

It was reported early in the morning that Elder Orson Pratt was missing. I caused the Temple hands and the princi-

pal men of the city to make search for him. . . . Elder Pratt returned in the evening. (LDS *History of the Church* 5:60–61)

The Alton, Illinois, newspaper reported:

We understand by the stage-driver from Nauvoo last evening, that O. Pratt had suddenly disappeared from the city. He left a paper containing his reasons for leaving—which were, the treatment his wife had received from Joe Smith.

It was supposed in Nauvoo that he had committed suicide, and about 500 persons were on the search for him. (*Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review* [July 23, 1842], 538)

Ebenezer Robinson was the editor and publisher of the *Times and Seasons* for a time at Nauvoo. He wrote of Orson's disappearance years later:

I remember well the excitement which existed at the time, as a large number of the citizens turned out to go in search for him, fearing lest he had committed suicide. He was found some five miles below Nauvoo, sitting on a rock, on the bank of the Mississippi river, without a hat. He recovered from his insanity, but at the next conference when the vote was called to sustain Joseph Smith as President of the church, he alone voted, No. (Ebenezer Robinson, *The Return* 2 [Davis City, Iowa, 1889]: 362–363)

Available Church records do not show that Orson Pratt suffered insanity. One author has published:

[The Pratt] Family tradition renounces the story of attempted suicide but perpetuates a legend that Orson did cut himself with a knife in order to write a letter in blood to the Prophet Joseph Smith. (Breck England, *The Life and Thought of Orson Pratt*, 80)

While Orson was gone, he was evidently agonizing over the decision to oppose Joseph. He returned home more determined to begin that opposition.

### **The July 15 Meeting**

When Joseph realized that Apostle Pratt was missing, he knew that the controversy had now gone public, for everyone would be asking why Orson would do such a thing. Joseph was aware that Bennett's letters and Orson's disappearance could turn public opinion quickly against himself and the Church. As an example of the animosity that Bennett's letters and news of Orson's disappearance created, one newspaper reported:

In this community, we verily believe, that there is not a man disconnected with the Mormons, who does not place implicit confidence in the disclosures of Gen. Bennett. (*Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review* [July 30, 1842], 2)

Knowing that the firestorm was gaining momentum, the Prophet called for a public meeting at the Grove near the Temple, even while the search for Orson was underway. A crowd gathered and Joseph addressed them on the subject of Bennett's immorality. The LDS history quotes Joseph:

I caused the Temple hands and the principal men of the city to make search for him. After which, a meeting was called at the Grove, and I gave the public a general outline of John C. Bennett's conduct. The people met again in the afternoon, and were addressed on the same subject by Brother Hyrum and Elder Kimball. . . . Elder Pratt returned in the evening. (*LDS History of the Church* 5:60–61)

Evidence that Joseph discussed the Sarah Pratt case at the July 15 meeting is described in these words:

After considerable search had been made but to no effect a meeting was called at the Grove where Joseph stated before the public a general outline of J. C. Bennetts conduct and especially with regard to Sis P [Sarah Pratt]. (*Dean C. Jessee, The Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:398–399; brackets in original text)

### **The July 22 General Meeting**

Bennett's Second Letter, which contained his charge that

Joseph had attempted to force Sarah to become his plural wife, was published in Springfield, Illinois, the same day that Orson disappeared. Copies of that newspaper arrived in Nauvoo a day or two later. Bennett's accusation about Joseph and Sarah was soon on every tongue. Joseph realized that as Prophet of the Church and mayor of Nauvoo, he must have the support of the people if he were to continue as their leader. Therefore, a meeting was announced for July 22 for the express purpose of giving the citizens of Nauvoo an opportunity to voice their opinions about the reports which were being circulated against him—most notable being the charge of polygamy.

At the appointed time a huge crowd gathered at the Grove. President Joseph Smith and Apostle Orson Pratt were both seated on the speaker's stand with other Church leaders. Both men would have an opportunity to speak. There would be ample opportunity granted for individuals, with a personal knowledge of any misconduct on Joseph's part, to publicly expose him.

If Joseph had been guilty of practicing plural marriage or of misconduct with any woman, he would not have called for a meeting in which there was to be a public examination. A guilty person never invites a public investigation. But Joseph knew he was innocent and could honestly meet any charge brought against him. Joseph wanted a public discussion with Orson to settle the issue permanently.

The following account of that general meeting was printed in the Church's official paper:

At a meeting of the citizens of the city of Nauvoo held in said city at the meeting ground, July 22d 1842.

Orson Spencer Esq. was called to the chair, and Gustavus Hills was appointed clerk.

The meeting was called to order by the chairman, who stated the object of the meeting to be to obtain an expression of the public mind in reference to the reports gone abroad, calumniating the character of Pres. Joseph Smith. Gen. Wilson Law [brother of Joseph's counselor, William Law] then rose and presented the following resolution.

*Resolved*—That, having heard that John C. Bennett was

circulating many base falsehoods respecting a number of the citizens of Nauvoo, and especially against our worthy and respected Mayor, Joseph Smith, we do hereby manifest to the world that so far as we are acquainted with Joseph Smith we know him to be a good, moral, virtuous, peaceable and patriotic man, and a firm supporter of law, justice and equal rights; that he at all times upholds and keeps inviolate the constitution of this State and of the United States.

A vote was then called and the resolution [presented by Wilson Law] adopted by a large concourse of citizens, numbering somewhere about a thousand men. Two or three, voted in the negative.

Elder Orson Pratt then rose and spoke at some length in explanation of his negative vote. Pres. Joseph Smith spoke in reply—

Question [asked by Joseph Smith] to Elder Pratt, ‘Have you personally a knowledge of any immoral act in me toward the female sex, or in any other way?’

Answer, by Elder O. Pratt, ‘Personally, toward the female sex, I have not.’

Elder O. Pratt responded at some length. Elder B. [Brigham] Young then spoke in reply, and was followed by Elders Wm. [William] Law[,] H. [Heber] C. Kimball and Pres. H. [Hyrum] Smith. Several others spoke bearing testimony of the iniquity of those who had calumniated Pres. J. Smith’s character.

Meeting adjourned for one hour.

P. M. Meeting assembled pursuant to adjournment and was called to order by the chairman.

A petition was then received from a committee appointed by the city council for the reception, approbation, and signatures of the citizens generally, petitioning the Governor of Illinois for protection in our peaceable rights, which was read approved, and signed by, 800 persons. ORSON SPENCER ESQ., *Chairman*. GUSTAVUS HILLS, *Clerk*.

The “Ladies Relief Society” [of which Emma Smith was president], also drew up a petition signed by about one thousand Ladies speaking in the highest terms of the virtue, phi-



lanthropy, and benevolence of Joseph Smith; begging that he might not be injured, and that they and their families might have the privilege of enjoying their peaceable rights.

A petition was also drawn up by many citizens in, and near Nauvoo, who were not Mormons, setting forth the same things. (*Times and Seasons* 3 [August 1, 1842]: 869)

Note that when Orson was asked if he had any personal knowledge of any immoral act by Joseph toward the female sex, he was forced to admit, “I have not.”

The fact that Joseph debated with Orson Pratt, in the presence of that huge crowd, shows how far the Prophet was willing to go to defend himself against the charges made by Bennett, Sarah, and Orson. When Orson gave the lengthy explanation of why he had voted against the resolution which stated that Joseph was virtuous, Joseph had a ready answer—and Orson had only hearsay from what he later admitted was a “wicked source.”

### **One Thousand Men Affirmed that Joseph Was Innocent**

It is significant that approximately one thousand men voted to adopt the resolution to “manifest to the world” that they knew Joseph to be virtuous, and one who upheld the laws and constitution of the state of Illinois and the United States. Bigamy was a crime in 1842 in the state of Illinois. Therefore, if Joseph had (as the LDS Church teaches) plural wives under the title of celestial marriage, spiritual wifery, or polygamy, he would have been guilty of committing a crime.

Joseph was so well known that if he had had several wives, many people would have known it, and there would have been more votes against him.

The thousand men knew of Bennett’s plural marriage charges against Joseph in the cases of Martha Brotherton, Nancy Rigdon, Sarah Pratt, and others. Yet they voted that he was moral, virtuous, and law-abiding—a thousand additional testimonies that Joseph was not a polygamist.

**Joseph Was Arrested on  
the Boggs Charge on August 8**

Bennett had released statements to the press charging Joseph with being the mastermind behind the shooting of former Governor Boggs of Missouri. *The Alton Telegraph and Democratic Review* for July 16, 1842, published:

Dr Bennett can furnish testimony that will convict him [Joseph] in any court of justice, of the attempt to assassinate Ex-Governor Boggs.

Dr. Bennett went to Missouri in July and obtained Martha Brotherton's affidavit, and while there convinced Missouri authorities that Joseph had ordered Orrin Porter Rockwell to assassinate Boggs. As a result, Illinois Governor Carlin sent a deputy sheriff of Adams County, Illinois, to Nauvoo to arrest Joseph. As if Joseph did not have enough troubles during those hectic days fighting the scandals about Martha, Nancy, and Sarah, before noon on August 8 the deputy and two assistants slipped into town and took Joseph and Porter into custody. Joseph appealed to the Nauvoo Municipal Court, which issued a writ of habeas corpus and released them temporarily from the deputy's custody. Joseph explained:

I was arrested . . . on a warrant issued by Governor Carlin, founded on a requisition from Governor Reynolds of Missouri, upon the affidavit of ex-Governor Boggs, complaining of the said Smith as "being an accessory before the fact, to an assault with intent to kill made by one Orrin P. Rockwell on Lilburn W. Boggs," . . . the [Nauvoo] municipal court issued a writ of habeas corpus. . . . This writ demanded the bodies of Messrs. Smith and Rockwell to be brought before the aforesaid court; but these officers refused to do so, . . . they left us in the care of the marshal, without the original writ by which we were arrested, and by which only we could be retained, and [they] returned to Governor Carlin for further instructions, and myself and Rockwell went about our business. (LDS *History of the Church* 5:86–87)

Joseph knew that to return to Missouri under those terms

would bring about his death, so he remained in hiding most of the time until January 1843. He obtained attorneys to represent him in his legal battle against such unlawful treatment, and went into hiding by crossing the river into Iowa Territory where he was housed temporarily at the home of his uncle, John Smith, his father's brother.

The deputy sheriff from Adams County returned to Nauvoo two days later, and went to the little log Homestead House where Joseph and Emma resided. Not finding Joseph, he made threats and tried to alarm Emma, who was pregnant for the seventh time. She was expecting their eighth child since she had given birth to twins earlier.

### **Joseph's August 11 Meeting with Emma**

Emma was the contact between Joseph and the Church and city officials while he was in hiding in Iowa. Church business was kept in motion by sending messengers back and forth across the river. Joseph sent word for Emma and certain Church and civic leaders to meet with him on an island in the river between Nauvoo and Montrose on the night of August 11. Therefore, faithful Emma left her children in the care of another, and under the cover of darkness, stole down to the river's edge behind Joseph's Red Brick Store. There she, Hyrum, and a number of other Church officials boarded a skiff and crossed the river to the island where Joseph and a man in another skiff met them. Church and city problems were discussed, as well as the persecutions that Joseph was suffering.

### **Joseph's Tribute to Emma**

The meeting on the island with his beloved Emma was a dramatic moment for the Prophet, and he later paid this loving tribute to her:

How glorious were my feelings when I met that faithful and friendly band, on the night of the eleventh, on Thursday, on the island at the mouth of the slough, between Zarahemla [Iowa] and Nauvoo: with what unspeakable delight, and what transports of joy swelled my bosom, when I took by the hand, on that night, my beloved Emma—she that was my wife, even

the wife of my youth, and the choice of my heart. Many were the reverberations of my mind when I contemplated for a moment the many scenes we had been called to pass through, the fatigues and the toils, the sorrows and sufferings, and the joys and consolations, from time to time, which had strewed our paths and crowned our board. Oh what a commingling of thought filled my mind for the moment, again she is here, even in the seventh trouble [seventh pregnancy]—undaunted, firm, and unwavering—unchangeable, affectionate Emma! (ibid., 107)

These are the tender words of a man who has complete trust and respect for his wife. Joseph's testimony was that he found Emma to be the same day after day. She was undaunted, firm, unwavering, unchangeable, and affectionate. This is in complete opposition to Mormon polygamists' portrayal of Emma as wavering and changeable on the subject of a plurality of wives. Joseph's tribute to her is the strongest testimony that Emma was always firm and unchangeable. It also indicates that she was his only wife.

### **Orson and Sarah Excommunicated on August 20**

When Joseph went into hiding, he left the case of Orson Pratt in the hands of the apostles who were at Nauvoo at the time. They labored with Orson from August 8 to 20 in an attempt to get him to recall the untrue statements which he had made against Joseph, but their labor was in vain. Orson continued to believe Sarah's accusations against Joseph and to condemn the Prophet.

Apostle Brigham Young recorded in his journal that he and other members of the Twelve labored with Orson. Brigham Young's history states:

August 8, 1842—Assisted by Elders H. C. Kimball and George A. Smith, I spent several days laboring with Elder Orson Pratt, whose mind became so darkened by the influence and statements of his wife, that he came out in open rebellion against Joseph, refusing to believe his testimony or obey his

counsel. He said he would believe his wife in preference to the Prophet. Joseph told him if he did believe his wife and follow her suggestions, he would go to hell. (“History of Brigham Young,” quoted in *Succession in the Priesthood*, 19)

Apostles Wilford Woodruff and John Taylor also met in council with Orson during those days. In spite of the apostles’ efforts, Orson refused to recall the false statements against Joseph.

Because of Orson’s refusal, the Twelve rejected him as a member of their quorum and he was excommunicated from the Church on August 20 (see Elden J. Watson, *The Orson Pratt Journals*, 181).

Another record stated:

August 20: After four days of fruitless efforts at reconciliation, the Twelve excommunicated Pratt for “insubordination,” and Sarah for “adultery.” (Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, *A Book of Mormons*, 212)

Although the Pratts were excommunicated, they remained in Nauvoo, and five months later were reinstated. The LDS history records Joseph stating on January 20, 1843:

This council was called to consider the case of Orson Pratt who had previously been cut off from the Church for disobedience. . . . at four I baptized Orson Pratt and his wife, Sarah Marinda . . . in the Mississippi River, and confirmed them in the Church, ordaining Orson Pratt to his former office in the quorum of the Twelve. (*LDS History of the Church* 5:255–256)

Orson never fully repented. He “confessed his error and sin in criticizing Joseph,” but he remained convinced that Joseph was a liar and a polygamist. He believed Sarah and Bennett, and perhaps Apostle Brigham Young, who had a plural wife at the time he was laboring with Orson.

### **The August 29 “Special Conference”**

Joseph, who was now hiding in his own home, called for a “Special Conference” to take place on August 29 for the purpose of sending a large missionary force nationwide to combat Bennett’s falsehoods. On Saturday, August 27, Joseph directed the printing of the previously mentioned “anti-Bennett broadside” which contained two newspaper pages of affidavits proving Bennett’s charges to be false. It was entitled *Affidavits and Certificates Disproving the Statements and Affidavits Contained in John C. Bennett’s Letters*.

Since Joseph was still in hiding, Hyrum presided at the August 29 conference where 380 missionaries were recruited to distribute the broadsides nationwide.

The LDS history recorded:

President Hyrum Smith introduced the object of the conference by stating that the people abroad had been excited by John C. Bennett’s false statements, and that letters had frequently been received inquiring concerning the true nature of said reports; in consequence of which it is thought wisdom in God that every elder who can, should go forth to every part of the United States, and take proper documents. . . . humbly setting forth the truth as it is, in God, and our persecutions, by which the tide of public opinion will be turned. . . . Every one is wanted to be ready in two or three days. (ibid., 136–137)

During Hyrum’s address, Joseph suddenly walked up on the Stand and sat down. The crowd was surprised and overjoyed by his presence. When Hyrum ceased speaking, Joseph arose and spoke to the mass of people with strong words, giving more information about the Pratt case, saying:

Orson Pratt has attempted to destroy himself, and caused almost all the city to go in search of him. Is it not enough to put down all the infernal influences of the devil, what we have felt and seen, handled and evidenced, of this work of God? . . . They would deliver me up, Judas like; but a small band of us shall overcome. . . . And as to all that Orson Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, or George W. Robinson [Rigdon’s son-in-law and Bennett’s loyal friend] can do to prevent me, I can kick them

off my heels, as many as you can name; I know what will become of them. (ibid., 138–139)

Joseph is reported to have also said in that address:

O. P [Orson Pratt] and others of the same class caused trouble by telling stories to people who would betray me and they must believe these stories because his wife told him so! (Dean C. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:446)

This statement by Joseph was omitted by the compilers of the Mormon Church's official history entitled *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Period I. History of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, by Himself*. Was this statement by Joseph omitted because the LDS leaders did not want the readers to know the truth—that Joseph opposed polygamy? It is another evidence that Joseph did not write a major part of that history, in spite of the fact that the title page states that he was its author.

### **The LDS Church Teaches that Joseph Was Afraid to Introduce Polygamy**

The Mormons have portrayed Joseph as cowardly—one who practiced polygamy but was afraid to make public a revelation on the subject because it would have brought persecution upon him and the Church. An example of this claim is found in the testimony of Elder L. O. Littlefield, in which he stated:

The doctrine of celestial marriage, I have the best of reasons for believing, was understood and believed by him (Joseph Smith, the Prophet) . . . when he lived in Kirtland . . . but he was not required to reveal it to the Church until some time during the residence of the Saints at Nauvoo, where he received a revelation from the Lord setting forth in detail the results to be obtained by keeping inviolate all the laws connected with this sacred condition of things. And in consequence of the prejudices of the Saints and the tide of persecution which he well knew he would have to encounter from the outside world, wherein his life would be endangered, he delayed, as long as possible, to make this principle known,

except, to a few of the most faithful and humble of the Saints. (Andrew Jenson, *The Historical Record* 6 [May 1887]: 230)

Joseph afraid of persecution? Joseph, who never lied to save himself, his own family, or the Saints from wars, death, prisons, chains, beatings, murders, rapes, burning and pillaging of homes, forced marches, children's bleeding feet on snow, starvation, disease, cold, heat, and whatever persecution was heaped upon him or the Saints? His infant adopted son, who was recovering from measles, died as a result of exposure to the bitter cold when a mob broke into the room where the Prophet and his family were sleeping, and holding the door open, dragged Joseph outside. The graves of many Saints, from Kirtland to Haun's Mill to Nauvoo (including Joseph's own), attest to the fact that he never shrank from persecution!

Let Joseph speak on this subject in his own defense. According to the Prophet, he had no fear of man or men. On September 8, 1842, one week after the August 29 Special Conference, the Prophet said in a letter to James Arlington Bennett of Long Island, New York (no relation to John C. Bennett):

and as to my having any fears of the influence that he [Dr. John C. Bennett] or any other man or set of men may have against me—I will say this is most foreign from my heart; for I never knew what it was, as yet, to fear the face of clay, or the influence of man. My fear, sir, is before God. I fear to offend Him, and strive to keep His commandments. . . . JOSEPH SMITH. (LDS *History of the Church* 5:157, 159)