

On Marriage

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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: and that the solemnization should be performed by a presiding high priest, high priest, bishop, elder, or priest, not even prohibiting those persons who are desirous to get married, of being married by other authority.-We believe that it is not right to prohibit members of this church from marrying out of the church, if it be their determination so to do, but such persons will be considered weak in the faith of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

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

The clerk of every church should keep a record of all marriages, solemnized in his branch.

All legal contracts of marriage made before a person is baptized into this church, should be held sacred and fulfilled. 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. It is not right to persuade a woman to be baptized contrary to the will of her husband, neither is it lawful to influence her to leave her husband. All children are bound by law to obey their parents; and to influence them to embrace any religious faith, or be baptized, or leave their parents without their consent, is unlawful and unjust. We believe that husbands, parents and masters who exercise control over their wives, children, and servants and prevent them from embracing the truth, will have to answer for that sin.

We have given the above rule of marriage as the only one practiced in this church, to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system" is a matter of his own manufacture; and further to disabuse the public ear, and shew [show] that the said Bennett and his misanthropic friend Origen Bachelor, are perpetrating a foul and infamous slander

upon an innocent people, and need but be known to be hated and despise. In support of this position, we present the following certificates:-

We the undersigned members of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and residents of the city of Nauvoo, persons of families do hereby certify and declare that we know of no other rule or system of marriage than the one published from the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, and we give this certificate to show that Dr. J. C. Bennett's "secret wife system" is a creature of his own make as we know of no such society in this place nor never did.

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

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

Emma Smith, President,
Elizabeth Ann Whitney, Counsellor [Counselor],
Sarah M. Cleveland, Counsellor [Counselor],
Eliza R. Snow, Secretary,
Mary C. Miller,
Catharine Pettey,
Lois Cutler,
Sarah Higbee,
Thirza Cahoon,
Phebe Woodruff Ann Hunter,
Leonora Taylor,
Jane Law,
Sarah Hillman,
Sophia R. Marks,
Rosannah Marks,
Polly Z. Johnson,
Angeline Robinson,
Abigail Works.