

earth, we never could fulfill the purposes of God in this estate.

I have this paper in my possession, and have had for a number of months past. In fact, it was written at my request, and then given into my care, and I have preserved it with a view, when thought proper, to have it published. And as it is a sermon of itself, it would perhaps be more interesting than anything I could say on the present occasion, and therefore, with President Taylor's permission, I will read it to the congregation.

[The affidavit was then read by Elder Smith.]

*The following statement was sworn to before John T. Caine, a notary public, in Salt Lake City, Feb. 16, 1874:*

"Inasmuch as it may be interesting to future generations of the members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to learn something of the first teachings of the principle of plural marriage by President Joseph Smith, the Prophet, Seer, Revelator and Translator of said Church, I will give a short relation of facts which occurred within my personal knowledge, and also matters related to me by President Joseph Smith.

"I was employed as a clerk in President Joseph Smith's office, under Elder Willard Richards, and commenced to labor in the office on the 10th day of February, 1842. I continued to labor with Elder Richards until he went east to fetch his wife to Nauvoo.

"After Elder Richards started east I was necessarily thrown constantly into the company of President Smith, having to attend to his public and private business, receiving and recording tithings and donations, attending to land and other matters of business. During this period I necessarily became well acquainted with Emma Smith, the wife of the Prophet Joseph, and also with the children—Julia M. (an adopted daugh-

ter), Joseph, Frederick and Alexander, very much of the business being transacted at the residence of the Prophet.

"On the 7th of October, 1842, in the presence of Bishop Newel K. Whitney and his wife Elizabeth Ann, President Joseph Smith appointed me Temple Recorder, and also his private clerk, placing all records, books, papers, etc., in my care, and requiring me to take charge of and preserve them, his closing words being, 'When I have any revelations to write, you are the one to write them.'

"During this period the Prophet Joseph frequently visited my house in my company and became well acquainted with my wife Ruth, to whom I had been married five years. One day in the month of February, 1843, date not remembered, the Prophet invited me to walk with him. During our walk, he said he had learned that there was a sister back in England, to whom I was very much attached. I replied there was, but nothing further than an attachment such as a brother and sister in the Church might rightfully entertain for each other. He then said, 'Why don't you send for her?' I replied, 'In the first place, I have no authority to send for her, and if I had, I have not the means to pay expenses.' To this he answered, 'I give you authority to send for her, and I will furnish you with means,' which he did. This was the first time the Prophet Joseph talked with me on the subject of plural marriage. He informed me that the doctrine and principle was right in the sight of our Heavenly Father, and that it was a doctrine which pertained to celestial order and glory. After giving me lengthy instructions and informations concerning the doctrine of celestial or plural marriage, he concluded his remarks by the words, 'It is your privilege to have all the wives you want.' After this introduction, our conversations on the subject of plural marriage were very frequent, and he appeared to take par-

ticular pains to inform and instruct me in respect to the principle. He also informed me that he had other wives living besides his first wife Emma, and in particular gave me to understand that Eliza R. Snow, Louisa Beman, Desdemona W. Fullmer and others were his lawful wives in the sight of Heaven.

"On the 27th of April, 1843, the Prophet Joseph Smith married to me Margaret Moon, for time and eternity, at the residence of Elder Heber C. Kimball; and on the 22nd of July, 1843, he married to me, according to the order of the Church, my first wife Ruth.

"On the 1st day of May, 1843, I officiated in the office of an Elder by marrying Lucy Walker to the Prophet Joseph Smith, at his own residence.

"During this period the Prophet Joseph took several other wives. Amongst the number I well remember Eliza Partridge, Emily Partridge, Sarah Ann Whitney, Helen Kimball and Flora Woodworth. These all, he acknowledged to me, were his lawful, wedded wives, according to the celestial order. His wife Emma was cognizant of the fact of some, if not all, of these being his wives, and she generally treated them very kindly.

"On the morning of the 12th of July, 1843, Joseph and Hyrum Smith came into the office in the upper story of the 'brick store,' on the bank of the Mississippi River. They were talking on the subject of plural marriage. Hyrum said to Joseph, 'If you will write the revelation on celestial marriage, I will take and read it to Emma, and I believe I can convince her of its truth, and you will hereafter have peace.' Joseph smiled and remarked, 'You do not know Emma as well as I do.' Hyrum repeated his opinion and further remarked, 'The doctrine is so plain, I can convince any reasonable man or woman of its truth, purity or heavenly origin,' or words to their effect. Joseph then said, 'Well I will write the revelation and we will see.' He then requested

me to get paper and prepare to write. Hyrum very urgently requested Joseph to write the revelation by means of the Urim and Thummim, but Joseph, in reply, said he did not need to, for he knew the revelation perfectly from beginning to end.

"Joseph and Hyrum then sat down and Joseph commenced to dictate the revelation on celestial marriage, and I wrote it, sentence by sentence, as he dictated. After the whole was written, Joseph asked me to read it through, slowly and carefully, which I did, and he pronounced it correct. He then remarked that there was much more that he could write, on the same subject, but what was written was sufficient for the present.

"Hyrum then took the revelation to read to Emma. Joseph remained with me in the office until Hyrum returned. When he came back, Joseph asked him how he had succeeded. Hyrum replied that he had never received a more severe talking to in his life, that Emma was very bitter and full of resentment and anger.

"Joseph quietly remarked, 'I told you you did not know Emma as well as I did.' Joseph then put the revelation in his pocket, and they both left the office.

"The revelation was read to several of the authorities during the day. Towards evening Bishop Newel K. Whitney asked Joseph if he had any objections to his taking a copy of the revelation; Joseph replied that he had not, and handed it to him. It was carefully copied the following day by Joseph C. Kingsbury. Two or three days after the revelation was written Joseph related to me and several others that Emma had so teased, and urgently entreated him for the privilege of destroying it, that he became so weary of her teasing, and to get rid of her annoyance, he told her she might destroy it and she had done so, but he had consented to her wish in this matter to pacify her, realizing that he knew the revelation per-

fectly, and could rewrite it at any time if necessary.

"The copy made by Joseph C. Kingsbury is a true and correct copy of the original in every respect. The copy was carefully preserved by Bishop Whitney, and but few knew of its existence until the temporary location of the Camps of Israel at Winter Quarters, on the Missouri River, in 1846.

"After the revelation on celestial marriage was written Joseph continued his instructions, privately, on the doctrine, to myself and others, and during the last year of his life we were scarcely ever together, alone, but he was talking on the subject, and explaining that doctrine and principles connected with it. He appeared to enjoy great liberty and freedom in his teachings, and also to find great relief in having a few to whom he could unbosom his feelings on that great and glorious subject.

"From him I learned that the doctrine of plural and celestial marriage is the most holy and important doctrine ever revealed to man on the earth, and that without obedience to that principle no man can ever attain to the fulness of exaltation in celestial glory.

(Signed) WILLIAM CLAYTON.

"Salt Lake City, February 16th, 1874."

Jenson, Andrew, ed. *The Historical Record*. Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson, 1887, vol. 6, 224-226.

He then continued:

As I before said, I felt to read this document because of the instruction it would afford, and for the further object of showing that although "he is dead, he yet speaketh." For this testimony of Brother Clayton will stand forever, though his body molds into dust. And I am, and so was the deceased when living, at the defiance of the world to dispute those statements. They are made from personal knowledge derived from personal associations with the Prophet Joseph Smith

himself, not with a view to gain notoriety, but rather to leave behind him his testimony with regard to this important principle. He has done so. And as he has here stated, as having come from the mouth of the Prophet, this doctrine of eternal union of husband and wife, and of plural marriage, is one of the most important doctrines ever revealed to man in any age of the world. Without it man would come to a full stop; without it we never could be exalted to associate with and become gods, neither could we attain to the power of eternal increase, or the blessings pronounced upon

Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the fathers of the faithful.

There are but a few witnesses now living in relation to the coming forth of this revelation; there never were many that were intimately acquainted with the prophet and his teaching upon this subject. I look around me and see a number of persons in this assembly whose hair has grown grey in the service of God, and who had an intimate acquaintance with our martyred prophet; but few, if any of them, were so closely identified with him in this matter as Brother Clayton.

There are, however, enough witnesses to these principles to establish them upon the earth in such a manner that they never can be forgotten or stamped out. For they will live; they are destined to live, and also to grow and spread abroad upon the face of the

earth, to be received and accepted and adopted by all the virtuous, by all the pure in heart, by all who love the truth, and seek to serve Him and keep His commandments; they are bound to prevail, because they are true principles.

Now we are called upon to pay our last respects to Brother Clayton. His spirit has taken its flight; it has gone to the Father from whence it came, as is taught in the Book of Mormon. When the spirit leaves the body, it returns, says the prophet, immediately to God, to be assigned to its place, either to associate with the good and the noble ones who have lived in the Paradise of God, or to be confined in the "prison" house to await the resurrection of the body from the grave. Therefore we know that Brother Clayton has gone to God, gone to receive the partial judgment of the Almighty, which pertains to the