JOSEPH THE SEER'S PLURAL MARRIAGES.

HIS WIFE EMMA'S CONSENT THERETO.

THE following testimony in relation to the Prophet Joseph Smith's marital relations will be of great interest to the Latter-day Saints, and should offer convincing proof to every one who reads it, that the martyred Seer not only taught but entered into the practice of plural marriage, and that he did so with the full knowledge, consent and assistance of his wife Emma, whose alleged "last testimony" has been published, containing a denial of these facts. There is no need of these proofs to the Saints who lived in Nauvoo, nor the great bulk of those who never resided there; but they are given for the benefit of all who may entertain any doubts whatever upon this important subject:

SALT LAKE CITY,
Oct. 17, 1879.

Editor Deseret News:

Dear Sir.—While I am aware of your disinclination to publish the many foolish fabrications of backsliders from the faith, and your general reticence on this subject, yet some statements contained in a paper lately forwarded me, being of no ordinary kind, demand the publication of certain facts which I have in my possession, which must be my apology for presenting this matter.

No one can regret more than myself the necessity of presenting to the numerous readers of the NEWS, certain facts relative to Joseph Smith's (the prophet) connection with the revelation on celestial or plural marriage and the inauguration of that doctrine in the Church; and were it not for the cause of truth in which I and my children and the Church are deeply interested, and in which the whole world should feel vitally concerned, I would seek to avoid this unpleasant task.

But in order, as briefly as possible, to present the whole subject, I will quote a portion of a dialogue or colloquy which is said to have occurred between Joseph Smith, the son, and Emma Bidamon, once the wife of Joseph Smith, the martyred prophet, at Nauvoo, in February last, and published in a monthly paper called the *Saints Advocate*, as the "Last Testimony of Sister Emma." Joseph Smith is represented as asking the questions while Emma Bidamon furnishes the answers, as follows:

Question.—"What about the revelation on polygamy? Did Joseph Smith have anything like it? What of spiritual wifery?"

Answer.—'There was no revelation on either polygamy or spiritual wives. *There were some rumors of something of the sort* of which I asked my husband (Joseph Smith). He assured me that all there was of it was, that in a chat about plural wives he had said: "Well, such a system might possibly be, if everybody was agreed to it, and would behave as they should; but they would not; and besides it was contrary to the will of heaven. No such thing as polygamy or spiritual wifery, was taught publicly or privately before my husband's death that I have now, or ever had any knowledge of."

Q.—"Did he not have other wives than yourself?"

A.—"He had no other wife but me, nor did he, to my knowledge, ever have."

Q.—"Did he not hold marital relations with women other than yourself?"

A.—"He did not have improper relations with any woman that ever came to my knowledge."

Q.—"Was there nothing about spiritual wives that you recollect?"

A.—"At one time my husband came to me and asked me if I had heard certain rumors about spiritual marriages, or any thing of the kind; 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."

In reply to the foregoing, I will give you the sworn statements and affidavits of a few reliable persons—among whom are two of the wives of the Prophet Joseph Smith, which I think, will assert quite as strong claims for belief and present a much better appearance of veracity than the published dialogue between Joseph Smith and his mother, for this reason, if no other, these people, well known to this community, are mostly still living and can be cross-examined, while "Sister Emma," whose lips are sealed in death, is represented as denying facts which it can be abundantly proven, were well known to her, and to many now living in these mountains, besides those who affidavits and statements accompany this communication. It is but fair to note that these affidavits were given many years ago, in view of the denials then being made by the representatives of that faction known as the "Reorganized Church," and before "Sister Emma," it is hoped, ever dreamed of denying facts which no one knew better than she did herself, and as I have good reason to believe, from admissions made to me by Alexander H. Smith, in 1866, and subsequently by Joseph Smith himself, before even Joseph could muster the courage or dared to venture upon the hazardous and untenable ground, his mother, now she is dead, is made to assume; which ground, if her memory of facts had failed, she should have assumed, herself, years ago. But to the proof:

Territory of Utah, }
County of Salt Lake. } ss.

Be it remembered, that on this twenty-sixth day of June, A. D. 1869, personally appeared before me, James Jack, a notary public in and for said county, Joseph Bates Noble, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath saith, that in the fall of 1840, Joseph Smith taught him the principle of celestial or plural marriage, or a plurality of wives; and that the said Joseph Smith declared that he had received a revelation from God on the subject, and that the angel of the Lord had commanded him (Joseph Smith) to move forward in the said order of marriage; and further, that the said Joseph Smith requested him (Joseph B. Noble) to step forward and assist him in carrying out the said principle, saying, *"In revealing this to you, I* have placed my life in your hands, therefore do not in an evil hour betray me to my enemies."

Subscribed and sworn to by the said Joseph B. Noble, the day and year first above written.

JOSEPH B. NOBLE.
[SEAL.] JAMES JACK,
Notary Public.

Elder Noble is still living at Bountiful, Davis County, Utah, and can be examined again on this and other points connected with this subject, with which he is familiar. I will here further state that Elder Joseph B. Noble swears (the affidavit I have on hand) before a notary public, on June 6, 1869, that he did on April 5, 1841, seal to Joseph Smith the Prophet, Miss Louisa Beaman, according to the revelation on plural marriage.

Testimony of Benjamin F. Johnson, now residing at Spring Lake Villa, Utah County, U. T.:

"On the first day of April, A.D. 1843, President Joseph Smith, Orson Hyde and William Clayton, and others, came from Nauvoo to my residence in Macedonia or Ramus, in Hancock County, Illinois, and were joyfully welcomed by myself and family as our guests.

"On the following morning, President Smith took me by the arm for a walk; leading the way to a secluded spot within an adjacent grove, where, to my great surprise, he commenced to open up to me the principle of plural or celestial marriage, but I was more astonished by his asking me for my sister Almera to be his wife. I sincerely believed him to be a prophet of God, and I loved him as such and also for the many evidences of his kindness to me, yet such was the force of my education, and the scorn that I felt towards anything unvirtuous, that under the first impulse of my feelings, I looked him calmly, but firmly in the face and told him that 'I had always believed him to be a good man and wished to believe it still and would try to; and that I would take for him a message to my sister, and if the doctrine was true, all would be well, but if I should afterwards learn that it was offered to insult or prostitute my sister I would take his life.' With a smile he replied, 'Benjamin, you will never see that day, but you shall live to know that it is true and rejoice in it.'

"He wished me see my sister and talk to her. I told him I did not know what I could say to convince her. He replied, 'When you open your mouth you shall be able to comprehend, and you shall not want for evidence nor words.' He also told me that he would preach a sermon that day for me which I would understand while the rest of the congregation would not comprehend his meaning. His subject was the ten talents, 'unto him that hath shall be given and he shall have abundantly, but from him that hath not, (*or will not receive*) shall be taken away that which he hath (or might have had).' Plainly giving me to understand that the talents represented wives and children, as the principle of enlargement throughout the great future to those who were heirs of salvation.

"I called my sister to private audience and with fear and trembling and feelings I cannot express, commenced to open the subject to her, when just as he had promised, the light of the Lord shone upon my understanding and my tongue was loosed, and *I*, at least, was convinced of the truth of what I was attempting to teach.

"My sister received my testimony, and in a short time afterwards consented to become the wife of President Smith.

"Subsequent to this I took her to the city of Nauvoo, where she was married, or sealed for time and eternity, to President Joseph Smith, by his brother Hyrum Smith, in the presence of myself and Louisa Beaman, who told me she had also been sealed or married to the Prophet Joseph. This was at the residence of my sister, the widow of Lyman R. Sherman, who also was a witness.

"After a short period, President Smith and company, viz., George Miller, Wm. Clayton, J. M. Smith, and Eliza and Emily Partridge (who were the wives of the Prophet) came again to Macedonia (Ramus), where he remained two days, lodging at my house with my sister as man and wife (and to my certain knowledge he occupied the same bed with her). This visit was on the 16th and *17th of* May, 1843, returning to Nauvoo on the 18th.

"Again, on the 19th of October, the same year, President Smith made us another visit at Macedonia and remained till the 21st. He was accompanied by Wm. Clayton. At this time (Oct. 20th, 1843,) he sealed my first wife to me for time and all eternity. * * *

"He also visited my mother at her residence in Macedonia and taught her in my hearing the doctrine of celestial marriage, declaring that an angel appeared unto him with a drawn sword, threatening to slay him if he did not proceed to fulfil the law that had been given to him. And counselled my mother to be sealed to his uncle, Father John Smith (father of Geo. A. Smith,) to which she consented, and to my certain knowledge was subsequently sealed to him by the Prophet. * *

After the death of the Prophet, I told President Brigham Young what he (Jos. Smith) had said to me relative to my taking Mary Ann Hale to wife. Prest. Young said it was right and authorized Father John Smith to seal her to me, which he did on the 14th of November, 1844.

(Signed) B. F. JOHNSON.

Territory of Utah, }
County of Salt Lake. } *s.s.*

Be it remembered that on this fourth day of March, 1870, personally appeared before me James Jack, a notary public in and for said county, Benjamin F. Johnson, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath deposeth and saith that the foregoing statements and testimony by him made and given are true and correct.

(Signed) B. F. JOHNSON.

Subscribed and sworn to by the said B. F. Johnson, the day and year above written.

[Seal] JAMES JACK,
Notary Public.

Testimony of Lorenzo Snow, now residing at Brigham City, Box Elder County, Utah.

"In the month of April, 1843, I returned from my European mission. A few days after my arrival at Nauvoo, when at President Joseph Smith's house, he said he wished to have some private talk with me, and requested me to walk out with him. It was toward evening, we walked a little distance and sat down on a large log that lay near the bank of the river; he there and then explained to me the doctrine of plurality of wives.

He said that the Lord had revealed it unto him and commanded him to have women sealed to him as wives, that he foresaw the trouble that would follow and sought to turn away from the commandment, that an angel from heaven appeared before him with a drawn sword, threatening him with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment.

He further said that my sister Eliza R. Snow had been sealed to him as his wife for time and eternity.

He told me that the Lord would open the way, and I *should* have women sealed to me as wives. This conversation was prolonged I think one hour or more, in which he told me many important things.

I solemnly declare before God and holy angels, and as I hope to come forth in the morning of the resurrection, that the above statement is true.

(Signed) LORENZO SNOW.

Territory of Utah, }
Box Elder County. } ss.

Personally came before me J. C. Wright, clerk of the county and probate courts in and for the county and Territory aforesaid, Lorenzo Snow, and who being duly sworn, deposeth and says, that the foregoing statement by him subscribed is true of his own certain knowledge.

{SEAL} *Witness my* hand and seal of court at my office in Brigham City, Box Elder County, Utah Territory, this 28th day of August, A. D. 1869. J. C. WRIGHT,
Clerk.

Affidavit of John Benbow, now deceased:

Territory of Utah, }
County of Salt Lake. } ss.

Be it remembered that on this twenty-eighth day of August, A. D., 1869, personally appeared before me, James Jack, a notary public, in and for said county, John Benbow, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon his oath said that in the spring or fore part of the summer of 1843, at his house, four miles from Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, President Joseph Smith taught him and his wife, Jane Benbow, the doctrine of celestial marriage, or plurality of wives, Hyrum Smith being present.

And further, that Hannah Ells Smith, a wife of the prophet, boarded at his house two months during the summer of the same year; and the said Hannah E. Smith also lived at his house several months in 1844, after the prophet's death. And further, that President Smith frequently visited his wife Hannah at his (J. B's.) house.

(Signed) JOHN BENBOW.

Subscribed and sworn to by the said John Benbow, the day and year first written.

[SEAL.] JAMES JACK,
Notary Public.

I might continue to multiply these statements and testimonies both of the living and the dead until your paper could not contain them, but the foregoing is sufficient to prove that Joseph Smith did teach the doctrine of plural marriage several years before his death, and not only so, but that he did also practice what he taught. Further, the fact is established that Joseph Smith received the revelation on celestial or plural marriage, and the eternity of the marriage covenant, prior to July 12th, 1843, the time when a portion of said revelation was written. The circumstances connected with the writing of this revelation at that date are fully set forth in an affidavit in my possession, by the clerk or scribe who first wrote it from the dictation of the Prophet. It is, however, somewhat lengthy, and as circumstances do not seem to require, I will withhold it for the present, and will now come closer home.

Affidavits of two of the wives of Joseph Smith, the Prophet:

Territory of Utah, }
County of Millard. } s.s.

Be it remembered that on the first day of July, A. D. 1869, personally appeared before me, Edward Partridge, Probate Judge in and for said county, Eliza M. (Partridge) Lyman, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath saith, that on the 11th day of May, 1843, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, she was married or sealed to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by James Adams, a High *Priest in* said Church, * * * in the presence of Emma (Hale) Smith and Emily D. Partridge.

(Signed)
ELIZA M. (P.) LYMAN.

Subscribed and sworn to by the said Eliza Maria Lyman, the day and *year first* above written.

EDWARD PARTRIDGE,
[SEAL] Probate Judge.

And again:

Territory of Utah, }
County of Salt Lake. } s. s.

Be it remembered that on this first day of May, A. D. 1869, personally appeared before me, Elias Smith, Probate Judge for said county, Emily Dow (P.) Young, who was by me sworn in due form of law, and upon her oath said, that on the 11th day of May, A. D. 1843, at the City of Nauvoo, County of Hancock, State of Illinois, she was married (or sealed) to Joseph Smith, President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, by James Adams a High Priest in said Church * * * *in* presence of Emma (*Hale*) Smith, (now Emma Bidamon) and Eliza M. Partridge Smith (now Eliza M. Lyman.)

(*Signed*) EMILY D. P. YOUNG.

Subscribed and sworn to by the said Emily D. P. Young, the day and year first above written.

ELIAS SMITH,
Probate Judge.

One more statement will suffice for the present, although, if necessary, many more sworn statement of reliable individuals could be furnished upon the subject, besides the testimonies of scores of living witnesses in absolute denial of the alleged "last testimony of Sister Emma."

CERTIFICATE.

I, Lovina Walker (eldest daughter of Hyrum Smith), hereby certify, that while I was living with aunt Emma Smith, in Fulton City, Fulton County, Illinois, in the year 1846, she told me that she, Emma Smith, was present and witnessed the marrying or sealing of Eliza Partridge, Emily Partridge, Maria Lawrence, and Sarah Lawrence to her husband, Joseph Smith, and that she gave her consent thereto.

(Signed) LOVINA WALKER.

"We hereby witness that Lovina Walker, made and signed the above statement, on this 16th day of June A.D. 1869, at Salt Lake City, Salt Lake Co., U. T., of her own free will and accord.

(Signed) HYRUM S. WALKER
SARAH E. SMITH,
JOSEPH F. SMITH."

Again, the foregoing is but a small part of the testimony that can be brought forward in relation to Sister Emma's knowledge of this principle. But is not this sufficient to convince any honest inquirer that the alleged "Last testimony of Sister Emma," is incorrect? That Joseph Smith did, not only teach, but practice this doctrine, and that too, with the full knowledge and consent of his first wife, Emma Smith. Indeed, if there is anything wanting to establish this fact, the ladies, (except Lovina Walker, who is now dead) whose testimonies are given above are still living, one in this city and the other in Fillmore, Millard Co., U. T. and can testify that Emma Smith (late Emma Bidamon) did herself teach them this principle, and with her own hand gave them to wife to her husband,

Respectfully,
JOSEPH F. SMITH.

We have also received the following, which corroborates the above in a most convincing manner. The Saints have perfect confidence in the testimony of Sister Eliza:

SALT LAKE CITY,
Oct. 17, 1879.

Editors Deseret News:

Recently, to my great astonishmen, I read an article headed "Last Testimony of Sister Emma," published in the *Saint's Advocate*, a pamphlet issued in Plano, Ill.