THE LIFE

OF

JOSEPH SMITH,

THE PROPHET.

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Joseph wanted the Saints to feel that every officer of the Church, from the President down to the least in authority, was responsible to the body of the Saints, as well as to God, for his conduct; and thereby he established a rule which was of great help at a later time.

Brigham Young made the motion to sustain Joseph Smith as President of the whole Church, and one vast sea of hands was presented, carrying the motion unanimously.

At this conference Apostle Orson Pratt remarked that a man’s body changes every seven years; and Joseph replied:

“There is no fundamental principle belonging to a human system that ever goes into another in this world or in the world to come; I care not what the theories of men are. We have the testimony that God will raise us up, and He has the power to do it. If any one supposes that any part of our bodies, that is, the fundamental parts thereof, ever goes into another body, he is mistaken.”

A special conference of the Elders was convened on the 10th of April, 1843, to ordain missionaries to go forth into the vineyards and build up churches; and one hundred and fifteen appointments were made by the united voice of the conference.

On the 12th of April two large parties of Saints landed at Nauvoo under the charge of Elders Lorenzo Snow, Parley P. Pratt and Levi Richards. On the day following, the emigrants and a great multitude of others assembled at the temple to listen to an address from the Prophet to the newcomers. He advised them concerning their temporal welfare, their means of life; and pronounced the blessings of heaven and earth upon them, inasmuch as they should keep the commandments of God.

The lull in the active persecution against the Prophet was soon at an end. His enemies never for an instant contemplated the relinquishment of their purpose to carry him into Missouri to be assassinated. Threats came to him from time to time, the low mutterings which precede the crash of a thunderbolt. He applied to the governor of Iowa to recall the writs issued against him upon requisitions from Missouri, so that he might visit the Saints in Zarahemla, basing his request upon the action taken by Judge Pope at Springfield, which substantiated the illegality of Missouri’s demand. But his request was in vain, and he was obliged to risk his liberty and his life whenever duty called him to the Iowa side of the river.

CHAPTER LVI.

THE CELESTIAL ORDER OF MARRIAGE—ETERNITY AND PLURALITY OF THE COVENANT—THE REVELATION WRITTEN AND DELIVERED TO THE HIGH COUNCIL—JOSEPH, HYRUM AND OTHERS OBEY IT.

Every woman has the right to virtuous wifehood and maternity. This was the Omnipotent design in her creation. Yet how shall it be fulfilled under modern systems? Clearly, the Creator can make known.

“When they are out of the world, they neither marry nor are given in marriage,” saith the revelation; therefore the ties of conjugal relation must be made here, and to endure beyond the gates of death they must be fixed by an eternal covenant with the divine sanction.

Joseph Smith’s mission was all-comprehending. From the Church organization, it expanded until it made known a code of moral law by which the modern world, under the light of Christian truth, may achieve social redemption and be forever purified.

The decree of the Lord making known to the Prophet the eternity and plurality of marriage, was a part of this sublime plan. It came to him little by little, as he was enabled to bear the dazzling light of celestial glory, and when eventually the full view of the holy order was permitted to him, he saw the
principles of eternal progression, the laws by which the universe is filled with shining and inhabited spheres to make the infinite glory of our God. The exaltation of these visions was all that mortal man could bear; and the Prophet felt that the dull, selfish world would refuse to understand the purity and promise, would refuse to undergo the earthly trials to secure the heavenly blessing, and would seek the death of such humble disciples of the Savior as should embrace this principle of eternal life.

Even after that portion of the revelation now recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, was made known to him, Joseph did not write it for a time; although he obeyed its commands and taught it to Hyrum and other faithful men, who, in prayer and humility before God, accepted and fulfilled its requirements.

The revelation therefore remained the unwritten law of God, established in the hearts and obeyed in the lives of some of His faithful servants, until the 12th day of July, 1843, when it was recorded, that it might remain a comfort and guide to the people after Joseph and Hyrum should pass away. On that day, under the Prophet’s dictation, and in the presence of Hyrum, the revelation was written by William Clayton. A copy of it was taken the next day by Joseph C. Kingsbury for Bishop Newel K. Whitney.

On the 12th day of August, 1843, the revelation was read before the high council and Presidency of the Stake at Nauvoo. There were present Hyrum Smith, who presented the principle; William Marks, Charles C. Rich and Austin Cowles, the Stake Presidency; and Samuel Bent, William Huntington, Alpheus Cutler, Thomas Grover, Lewis D. Wilson, David Fullmer, Aaron Johnson, Newel Knight, Leonard Sohey, Isaac Allred, Henry G. Sherwood and Samuel Smith, the high council.

After reading the revelation, Hyrum promised his brethren that they who accepted it should be blessed and sustained in the Church by the Spirit of God and the confidence of the Saints, and they who rejected it should fall away in their faith and power; and it was even so.

To promulgate this commandment and to obey it was probably the Prophet’s greatest earthly trial. Emma did not at first accept it; but later she became convinced of its truth and gave good women to her husband to wife as Sarah of old administered to Abraham.

Some of the Prophet’s brethren caused him great sorrow by teaching impurity of life under the guise of this holy principle; but their wickedness was uncovered and the Church was purged of their presence.

The teaching of the revelation has been a test of personal holiness. The men who have seen in this commandment a holy and exalted duty and who obeyed in meekness and purity, have lived by their faith and have come off triumphant; while those who have sought to minister to evil passions have sunk and been cast out.

There is not one word in the revelation, nor was there one word in the Prophet’s teaching other than purity and self-sacrifice.

The Lord said:

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“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;

"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;

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

"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;

"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;

"For these angels did not abide my law, therefore they cannot be charged, 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, for ever and ever.

"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 any word, which is my law, and is not sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, through 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.

"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 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 fullness and a continuation of the seeds for ever and ever.

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.

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

"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.

"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.

"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.

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"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 com-