JOSEPH, THE PROPHET.

His Life and Mission as Viewed by Intimate Acquaintances.

Memorial Services in honor of the Prophet Joseph Smith, held in the Sixteenth Ward, Salt Lake City, Sunday evening, December 23, 1894.

Reported specially for Church and Farm by F. E. Barker.

Services commemorative of the birth and memory of the Prophet Joseph Smith having become a yearly occurrence with Bishop Frederick Kesler and the Sixteenth ward, over which he presides, and the eighty-ninth anniversary of his birth falling on the Sabbath, more than usual pains were taken to solemnize this birthday of the Prophet.

In the morning appropriate exercises were held in the Sunday school.

At 6 o'clock in the evening, instead of the regular services, a large audience, including many invited guests from other parts of the city, assembled in the large new Assembly Hall of the ward, which was tastily decorated for the occasion, and participated in a special service held in honor of the birth of the great and revered Prophet of the last days, Joseph Smith. Suspended upon the wall over and surrounding the stand were large paintings, representing the Prophet in various scenes from the time he received his first vision, in 1820, up to the time of his martyrdom, in 1844.

The services were conducted under the direction of President Joseph F. Smith. There were present: The Apostles, John Henry Smith and Heber J. Grant; Patriarch of the Church, John Smith; of the Presidency of the Stake, Angus M. Cannon, Joseph E. Taylor and Chas. W. Penrose; besides many prominent members of the Church, some of whom having been personally acquainted with the Prophet.

The ward choir sang the opening hymn:

Praise to the man who communed with Jehovah,
Honored and blest be his ever great name.

Prayer was offered by Patriarch Joseph C. Kingsbury.

Choir sang the hymn commencing, "A poor wayfarer man of grief," which, as explained to the audience, was sung by the Prophet with President John Taylor and others in the Carriage Hall the afternoon of his martyrdom.

Bishop F. Kesler.

explained the custom, first originated with Sister Elizabeth Rilder, years ago, of holding a birthday party in honor of the Prophet in the Sixteenth ward. For nearly twenty years they had followed this custom, and for this occasion he had taken the liberty to invite President Joseph F. Smith and many prominent veterans in the Church from different parts of the city, and was pleased to see so many personal acquaintances of the Prophet present.

Bishop Kesler said he had made the acquaintance of the Prophet Joseph about the time of the founding of Nauvoo, formerly called Commerce, and still previously named Venus. He lived about twenty miles from the city of Nauvoo or that time in Iowa, it was in the habit of going over to Nauvoo to attend conferences, and he learned to know, and to love and revere the Prophet Joseph. He had bowed before Joseph Smith may many things as a prophet of God, and he had lived to see many of his predictions fulfilled. He had all confidence in his predictions and doctrines, and in his integrity, and the divinity of his calling and mission. He remembered also seeing him as a military commander, and considered he was the finest looking officer he ever beheld in uniform, and particularly as he appeared mounted on his large horse.

The next to speak was President Joseph F. Smith, who spoke as follows:

I do not rise to occupy much time, but to make a few preliminary remarks at the opening of this meeting, in addition to what our Bishop has already said. We do a great deal of celebrating in one way and another. We celebrate the birthdays of our favorite generals and great men of the age, and we have special holidays when we suspend our labors and cares of life and engage in such pleasing pastimes as will best suit us. We sometimes, too, celebrate occasions on which some great events have taken place, and so on. I should like to see introduced among the Latter-day Saints, even at the risk of introducing another general holiday, the practice of celebrating or commemorating the birthday of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It is now over fifty years since he was martyred; and during those fifty years, we have never had to my
knowledge more than a small private gathering, occasionally, in honor of the birthday of the man who was chosen of God and designated by His very mouthpiece, God Almighty, to the inhabitants of the earth in the dispensation of the fullness of times. The only exception I recall was when, on the 24th of December, 1904, the general presidency and observed among the Latter-day Saints, preparatory to the final completion and dedication of the Salt Lake Temple.

In the following article, we celebrate what is supposed to be the birthday of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, but we get a long way off from His birthday; so that now, instead of celebrating the birth of the Lord, which was on the 6th of April, we celebrate the 23rd of December. In each year. And it is a proper thing that we should hollow His birthday, above all others. And in my judgment—and of course I may be a little biased in regard to this matter—in my judgment, the next birthday dedication to this year, that of Joseph Smith, the founder of the Latter-day Saints, from that time to this, is the birthday of the Lord in the world.

Let me tell you a little circumstance that I saw myself and you would think it very inappropriate of a Prophet. Perhaps I have reasons for it; but I think that perhaps it would be difficult for me to explain. I was one day riding the street in the Mansion with my cousin, Alexander Smith. We were amusing ourselves in the garden, when we noticed a few men standing within six or eight feet of the door of the Mansion, and we were playing at the gate just outside the stone steps, when all of a sudden the door flew open and I looked, and there came a great, big man right off the end of Joseph Smith's foot, and he hit on the sidewalk. I knew it as myself. Well, I wondered what in the world was the matter. Since I grew to be a man, I learned that this man was there insulting the Prophet, and abusing him in his own house, until the Prophet thought he had stood enough abuse from him, so he opened the door and kicked him out; that he did not go as quickly as the Prophet wanted him to, so he gave him the assistance of his boot, and helped him out. Well, now, some blasted man said to God do such a thing as that? Some would be shocked beyond measure to think that the face of God and the face of His son Jesus Christ—who had seen the glory that was manifested in the Temple in Kirtland, when Moses, and Elias, and John the Baptist, visited him, and Christ Himself also again—and their countenances shone upon him as the brightness of the sun—that a man who had seen wonderful things, and who had been instructed with the great mission of restoring the greatest revelation the earth for the last time, should be seen to kick a man out of his house. And I think that we have tried beyond endurance many a time on account of false accusations by malicious persons, by wicked men, by mobs and murderers, and evil criers, who are in the world in the day that he received his first message from God until the day they succeeded in getting away totally from the earth. There was never a moment of his life that he was free from such things as these, being bounded, and abused, and insulted by wicked men, and he had been less a man if he had not. He had little to bear it on his house that day. I saw him on another occasion standing on the street corner, with his face looking favorably for the speaker to be heard by the congregation from the stand. A wagon was drawn near to the sidewalk, and he appeared and took his position in the wagon box, and from this position he addressed the people. We remember this circumstance well. I also remember seeing him riding upon his horse, and his horses' ears before us suspended upon the wall here is supposed to represent. He was dressed in his uniform, as he appears there. The last time I saw him was when he crossed the river, he and my father from Iowa back to Nauvoo, after they had started for the Rocky Mountains; for let me tell you that the Prophet Joseph contemplated journeying to these mountains for the purpose of looking for the sacred temple. We are looking out for the people of God. Being constantly persecuted by his enemies, he laid his plans to slip out of the way, and come out to these mountains to explore them with a view to seeking out a place where the sacred temple could be gathered and worship God in peace and according to the dictates of his heart. And in this he had these false brethren, of whom I have been speaking, raised the hue and cry only, and besides the hero. When that word came to him he was wounded in his feelings, and so he turned about and said: "If this is all my friends care for my life, why should I care for it?" And he returned home and went as he said, "like a lamb to the slaughter." I saw him and my father as they were rowing in a skiff across the Mississippi river, and watched them till they landed at the bank of the river near the old Times and Seasons printing office, watched them as they walked up the bank of the river on to Water street, and walked along and into the building. Joseph sat down while my father washed and arranged his toiles. And while there, he took me on his knee and trotted me and played with me. In a little while, any father came in, and said: "What is the matter with this little boy?" Father said, "Nothing, I guess." He says, "He looks as though he hadn't a drop of blood in him." I remember it so well. Up to this time, you may remember, I had lived on milk, a good deal of it skim milk, and I suppose I was rather pale, a circumstance that the average opinion of my mother, brought on by cruel persecutions in Missouri. This is what I remember in the life of the Prophet Joseph. But what I remember most and where it made the most impression on my thinking, and what is greatest to my salvation, is the Word of God. In my hand, is the word of God through Joseph Smith to the world, and especially to the members of the Church Christ of Latter-day Saints throughout the world, and that by the gift and power of God He translated
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Bishop F. Kesler then asked all present who were acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith to rise to their feet. The following responded:


All who had seen the Prophet Joseph Smith were then called for, when the following responded: Jane Kesler, Elizabeth Jeffs, Roxana Sophia Tripp and John R." Smith.

Sister Roxana S. Tripp and Oliver G. Workman were the only ones present who were baptized by the Prophet personally.

In response to the query as to whether anyone present had been ordained under the hands of Joseph Smith to any office of Priesthood, Bro. Joseph C. Kingsbury said, "I was ordained an Elder under the hands of Joseph Smith in Kirtland, Ohio."

President Joseph F. Smith: "I want you to tell you another little circumstance connected with the Prophet Joseph C. Kingsbury. He is the man that made the first copy of the revelation on celestial marriage. He was in the hands of the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I know that he was not the object of personal care of a branch of his family. He is a man that was not betrayed trust that was ever imposed in him by the Prophet Joseph Smith, and I have never known a man that was not betrayed trust that any man ever imposed in him; and that is the kind of man that will ever live, and will maintain eternal life. Such as he are the type of men that will ever live in the faith to the end, because they have integrity, and because when they know the truth they will do it, and they will not waver to the right or the left. If they should take their lives to keep in the straight path.

Levi there should be a misunderstanding. William Clayton who wrote the revelation on celestial marriage, as the Prophet said, as was the mouth of the Prophet Joseph. A copy of that document was placed in the hands of Phineas and Joseph C. C. Kingsbury made a copy of it."

Elder Samuel H. B. Smith said he was pleased to be present, and felt honored to be invited to participate in the celebration in honor of the Prophet Joseph Smith. He remembered many things dating back to the days of Kirtland, and the time of the martyrdom of the Prophet he was but a boy of ten years of age. He remembered the Prophet coming to his father's house, and hearing his voice and seeing him a number of times. He well remembered when the Prophet was driven out of Nauvoo, 1844, his father started from the farm on which the speaker then resided on a swift horse to try to rescue his father, but was too late.

Bishop Robert T. Burton was the next speaker. He said he knew the Prophet Joseph Smith. He was ordained to the priesthood and set apart as a member of the Church, hands by Hyrum Smith, brother of the Prophet, and father of President Joseph F. Smith. He was the first president of the city of Nauvoo at the time the martyrdom of the Prophet occurred, and well remembers the scenes of those times. The speaker thought it was not possible to take the life of Joseph, the prophet of God. He had many, many enemies, and always in an unscrupulous and unchristian manner, held in custody, and tried, but always acquitted of any charge brought against him. His innocence was imperious, but invariable something intervened to preserve his life, until the people began to think the wicked could not destroy the life of that great man; and when the awful news came, nobody can tell or feel as those felt who had their lives wound up in that man, the degree of gloom and sadness that pervaded every person in the city of Nauvoo. A large number of the people were in the militia, over whom Joseph Smith had been the superior officer. They felt as if they must go to Carthage, and from there to Nauvoo, and destroy the life of the Prophet. But this was overcome. In time the people were not going to lead the people. One said "follow me," and another "follow me," until people were misled. Most of the Apostles and leading Elders were absent on missions. I was acquainted with the Prophet Joseph. I was imperfectly acquainted with Brigham Young. When Brigham Young returned and arose in the congregation, and began to speak, I arose from my seat, as old hundreds of others, to look at Joseph. His voice, his language, every expression seemed to come from Joseph himself, and his testimony to many hundreds of the Latter-day Saints that from that time to this present has never been equalled for a moment. By it God communicated to His people who the successor of Joseph was, who was going to be great comfort to me. I speak it here in all soberness and thoughtfulness to my right hand. I knew Joseph Smith because I heard his voice, and felt his spirit and the influence of His Spirit.

Zina D. H. Smith. "I received a testimony for myself from the Lord of this world, and that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God."
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before I ever saw him, while I resided in the state of New York, given in answer to prayer. I knew him in his life-time, and know him to be a great, true man, and a servant of God.

The speaker also related in detail her experience and impressions on the occasion when President Brigham Young went to the whole congregation to be the Prophet Joseph, and her convictions were the same as those related to President Burton.

Continuing, she said: "I wish to bear my testimony to the principle of celestial marriage, that it is true. When I think of the man that took his life in his hands and went from place to place where God told him to go, and in the midst of persecutions, trials and vexations of every kind, made covenant with the women of God that have stood true to him—most of them—when I think of his integrity, and of his obedience, I think what a lesson it should be to us, that we know that he did not do this of his own accord. He sent word to me by my brother, saying, 'Tell Zina I put it off and put it off again, and when I went up to the head and stood by me and told me if I did not establish that principle upon the earth, I knew nothing and that I was an impostor and a liar.' President Young told us in several places—said he, 'Brethren, if you want wives, take the man for the woman.' I have come to the conclusion that what President Young said was true. I have come to the conclusion that I feel to bear my testimony to the truth of the work. I know it is the work of God, and that Joseph Smith was His prophet, and that Brigham Young was his successor, and those by whom I am surrounded are holy men, living to the best of their understanding, according to His will. Joseph Smith said: 'All will not be saved, who will not find fault with the words of life and salvation that God reveals through me for the salvation of my family, and for the salvation of the entire world.' And like an officer of the gate, and I will see you safe through into the celestial kingdom when the same thing takes place. I have been in Nauvoo, and I never in my life had a rebellious thought against that principle, for which I thank the Lord."

President Joseph F. Smith.

"I want to announce that this lady is a relative of President Joseph Smith, who was sealed to him in his lifetime, and lived with him as his wife in Nauvoo."

Lucy Walker Smith said she wished to relate one incident in the life of the Prophet Joseph that was deeply impressed upon her mind in her childhood. On one occasion in the winter of 1833, in a prayer meeting held at Father Joseph Smith's, the Prophet Joseph spoke, and after speaking a few words he set his eyes upon some object, and remained silent for a moment, and finally became beautifully transfigured in appearance. Then turning from his subject he spoke, saying, 'I know that Jesus Christ, our Savior, has been in our midst.' "Yes," said the Prophet. "God has revealed this to thee, Martin." He said further, "Brother Smith, do you know that the Lord has been in our midst tonight, and He has given me a commission to use you up unto eternal lives, and He has given you all to me, to be with me in my kingdom, as Joseph's Father's King, as Joseph's Father's Domom." This is a principle that was given in that early day, and more has been revealed even about it since.

Bathsheba W. Smith.

said: I rise to say that I know Joseph Smith was a true Prophet of God. I know that God, through that Prophet, revealed the endowments. I received mine in company with my husband when Joseph was living. I never had anything but faith. I know that President Young was the lawful successor of Joseph the Prophet. I heard Joseph's voice so plain, and even the different actions or gestures were the same in Brigham Young as in Joseph on the occasion referred to by Bishop Burton tonight. I wish to say that the pictures that are here of the Prophet are not true likenesses. Joseph was a handsome man, and above all he was a suffering man. These pictures do not do him justice, and the best I have seen are little better than caricatures.

President John Grant.

said she was acquainted with the Prophet Joseph Smith. She visited Nauvoo in 1842, remaining until 1843, and became acquainted with the Prophet's family and to some extent with the Prophet during that period, though he was in prison to avoid his enemies a great part of the time. The speaker said she was quite young when she visited Nauvoo, and was not then a member of the church, but she became convinced of the truth of the work, and that she had a testimony to bear of the divinity of the mission of the Prophet Joseph."

President Anson M. Cannon.

"I never knew Joseph Smith. We have none that look like him or does him justice. He was, as handsome as any man I have ever seen. He was a man of no pride, and I never heard him speak when it did not electrify my whole being and make my heart burn by the Lord."

The speaker was acquainted with Emma Smith also, the wife of the precious diamond robber, escaped from the Prophet, and knew she was a noble woman. He had often been surprised that she took the course she did in denying that the Prophet ever had more wives than one. In 1838, he visited David Whitmer and expressed this surprise to him and his household. They turned and said, Brother Cannon, Emma signed that affidavit. We have the evidences that that affidavit was signed after her death and to falsify the truth. "I know," said the speaker, "that Joseph Smith was a Prophet of God.""}

Patriarch John Smith.

said he supposed he was as well acquainted with the Prophet Joseph, his uncle, as anyone. He was often in the house with him and around where he was. He was 12 years of age when his father and the Prophet were married. Speaking of the current picture which was given by Sister Bathsheba W. Smith. "The Prophet Joseph stood even six feet high in his stocking feet and weighed 210 pounds. The Prophet Joseph, Hyrum Smith, stood five feet eleven and a half inches high and they weighed in the neighborhood from 210 to 212 pounds. The day they started for Carthage, when my father went out to get on his horse, he had his foot in the stirrup, stood for about two or three minutes, turned around, took the reins and hung his head and the watch from his pocket, and took them into the house and hung them up and hung them there. Then the watch he hung up that day I carry with me now.

At this point of the proceedings Sister Elizabeth Boundy read an original article eulogistic of the life and character of the Prophet.

Elder Edward Ruhton.

said he wished there was more time to speak of the Prophet Joseph Smith tonight. He became acquainted with the Prophet on the 11th of April, 1843, when he landed at Nauvoo as an emigrant. He saw a handsome looking man coming toward the horse. This person, who proved to be the Prophet, accosted him and asked if he had been in the west before. Answered in the affirmative, he asked the occasion of its landing. "There is a company of emigrants here," answered the speaker, "Oh, indeed; what are they?" said the Prophet. "They are called Mormons." "Are you a Mormon?" said Joseph. Answered in the affirmative, the Prophet continued: "I suppose you have heard a great deal said coming up the river about 'Joe Smith,' both good and evil." "Both kinds, sir," was the speaker's reply. Said the Prophet, "What do you come here for? What do you know about Mormonism?" The speaker raised his hand and said, "I know that Mormonism is true, or I would not be here. I know it for myself and not for another." Said he, "I am that same 'Joe Smith' you have heard so much talk about, do you think of me?" Said the speaker, "You are a Prophet of the living God. I know it when I see it," and he left. "I hope the rest of them all know that," answered the Prophet. I was there for 17 years of age, and I was very familiar with him, and he never forgot the "boy." In 1843 the Prophet told me that I should come here to the Rocky Mountains. He told me that I should see the things that have transpired since I have resided here. He told me of many local occurrences, that I might believe the other predictions of greatest moment which he made to me. We have great scenes to pass through that we little expected, but they will all come to pass. The speaker also bore testimony, similar to Bishop Burton, of Joseph's appearance, manners, and conduct.

Elder Homer Duncan.

said: "In 1838, in the spring, was the first time I ever saw the Prophet Joseph. When I had an introduction to him, Far West. He met with him in Missouri, but I knew that his work was true before I ever saw him. At the time I knew that he was a Prophet. I heard
the message of this work about the year 1828, and I rejoiced when I heard of it. In 1830, I heard the Book of Mormon, but I was still a little boy.

Referring to the appearance of Joseph Smith, the speaker said: "If you could see Joseph F. Smith when he was a little boy at that age, you would have seen a boy. The Prophet was a handsome young man and a very strong, solid, built man."

The speaker briefly related the circumstances surrounding his introduction to Joseph Burton when the mantle of Joseph the Prophet rested upon President Brigham Young. The Prophet was much impressed on this occasion, as were all others present. He particularly noted that the Prophet's voice and personal appearance of Brigham Young were a perfect counterpart of those naturally assumed and exhibited by the Prophet.

"When Joseph was taken to prison in 1849, the jailers would only let me go, they would willingly say down my life for the Prophet of God."

Elder Walter Wilcox said the first time he saw the Prophet was in the spring of 1835, at Kirtland, Ohio; he then being a boy of 14 years of age. "The occasion was a meeting held in the Temple, the first Sabbath after I arrived there. I watched the people come in, and when I saw Joseph Smith, I knew that he was the Prophet of God. On the third day of June, 1844 (seventeen days before Hiram was murdered), my mother took me over to his office, over what was called the brick store, and asked the Prophet if he would see him. I stood there waiting. My father had died in 1838, before the work was established. Joseph consented, and asked his brother Hyrum to be present in the ceremony, and I as proxy was sealed to my mother for my father."

Elder Claudius V. Spencer said he became acquainted with Joseph when he was a young man of 21 years of age. In referring to the incident related by Bishop Burton, he said that the Prophet was not a man of sin, or woman, in that congregation but knew Brigham Young was chosen of God to lead the people after Joseph Smith.

"I am a living witness that Joseph predicted in Nauvoo—'My people shall become a numerous and a mighty host in the farthest of the Rocky Mountains.' When those words were spoken they would have tested the credit of any man of the world, as there was not the least likelihood of their fulfillment at that time. Joseph was familiarly known as 'Joseph Young.'—I knew of calling him 'Mr. Young.' He was the most gifted man in the community, showed how close he was to the hearts of the people."

Elder Oliver G. Workman said he was an eye-witness of many of the events related to him in this evening, and could faithfully bear testimony that Joseph Smith was the Prophet of God. He was baptized with fifteen others at Nauvoo by the Prophet. Proof of the same was also present when the mantle of Joseph fell upon Brigham Young, and Joseph was with those previously given as to the miraculous manifestation. He had stood up for the life of Joseph Smith when his life was at stake.

Bishop F. Keesler said that Bishop Burton expressed the opinion that all the feelings entertained by the people generally, that Joseph's life could not be taken, although the speaker was 50 years of age, and yet he could hardly believe. On one occasion, at a meeting held near the mouth of the Nebo, Joseph arose to make a few remarks, and he related the story of a man who knew him when he was one of his front teeth out in their successful effort to pour oil on his body. His spirit, he said, left his body, and hovered over it in the air, and returned after it was over. They supposed they had killed him, but he had come back and taken his body. "The time has been broken," he said, "when my life could not be taken, but now my work is done."

Elder J. H. Cluff, who has charge of the colony and its operations, says the health of the people is good. They are feeling well over their situation, being perfectly contented. Last year a few members of the colony accepted the government invitation to return to the Sandwich Islands. Several of these letters breathed freely, expressing the wish that they were there, and declaring their intention to return to the colony as soon as practicable.

The crops raised this year include 1,650 bushels of wheat, 1,650 of oats, 1,900 of corn, 1,000 of beans, 1,000 of potatoes, besides 450 tons of hay, 125 tons of squashes and pumpkins, and a large amount of garden produce.

This season the colony has finished a granary to hold 14,000 bushels, and has been housed the crops.

The Hawaiians at Nauvoo have had sufficient breadstuffs to last them between two and three years. In this respect they are much better off than many people who have opportunities superior to those afforded them.

The colony will also market this year 350 head of swine.

Elder J. H. Cluff says that two years ago he received from the agricultural department of the government, a case of 300 paprika, 150 of beans, and 50 of tomatoes, and a case of 100 acres of garden produce. He also received a case of 50 pounds of tea, a case of 50 pounds of coffee, and a case of 100 pounds of sugar.

The colonists have been working steadily, and have made good progress. The land has been cleared, and the crops are now ready for harvest.

A few of the colonists have returned to the colony from the Sandwich Islands, and are now busy in the fields, working hard to get their harvest in.

No one is perfect.

There are no perfect preachers in the world. The only perfect men in the world are the doctors of divinity, who teach systematic theology. They know everything, all of it, and they know everything on only so much of the truth as they can hold, and, generally speaking, preachers don't hold a great deal. They are all part-timers." - H. W. Beecher.