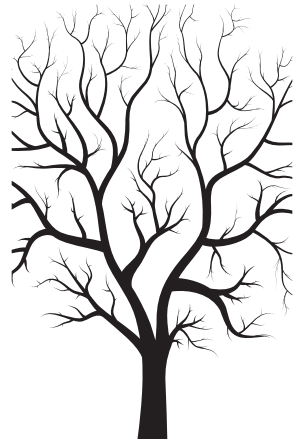
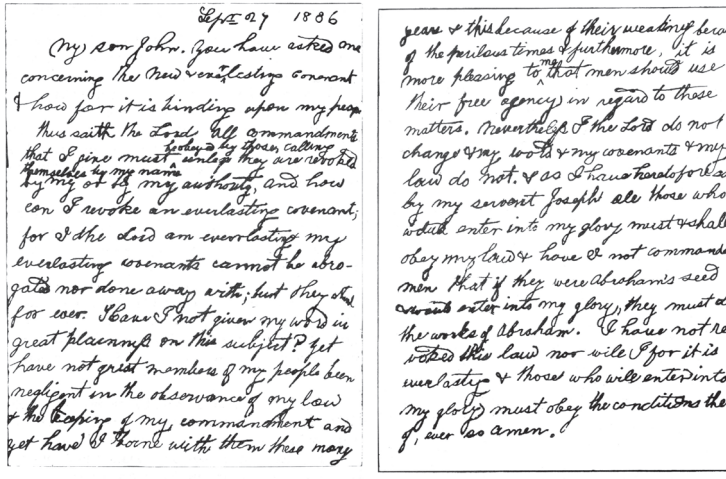


John Taylor's 1886 Revelation

BY BRIAN C. HALES

Of all of the documents quoted by Mormon fundamentalists, none is more common than a revelation written by church president John Taylor in 1886. The manuscript is important to modern polygamists, not only because of its content, but also because it simply exists. This article will discuss the document and its significance in the history of Mormon fundamentalism.



Sept 27 1886

(My) son John. You have asked me concerning the New & everlasting covenant & how far it is binding upon my people. Thus saith the Lord, All commandments that I give unto you, calling upon my name, unless they are revoked by me or by my authority, and how can I revoke an everlasting covenant, for I the Lord am everlasting my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with, but they stand for ever. Have I not given my word in great plainness on this subject? Yet have not great numbers of my people been negligent in the observance of my law & the keeping of my commandment and yet have I borne with them these many years & this because of their weakness & of the perilous times & furthermore, it is more pleasing to me that men should use their free agency in regard to these matters. Nevertheless I the Lord do not change & my word & my covenants & my law do not. & as I have stated formerly by my servant Joseph all those who would enter into my glory must & shall obey my law & have & not commanded men that if they were Abraham's seed they must enter into my glory, they must do the works of Abraham. I have not revoked this law nor will I for it is everlasting & those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof, even so amen.

John Taylor's September 27, 1886 revelation.

The 1886 Revelation

Available evidence supports that on Monday, September 27, 1886, Taylor received a personal revelation:

John W. Taylor, the president's son, reported in 1911: "I found it [the document] on his desk immediately after his death when I was appointed administrator of his estate."[1] An unofficial handwriting comparison analysis indicates that this document was indeed penned by Taylor.[2] Unfortunately, no contemporaneous details concerning its creation are available. While apparently constituting a genuine personal revelation to Taylor, the document was never presented to church leaders or to a church conference for a sustaining vote, which could have given it the status of scripture like that found within the Doctrine and Covenants.

Doctrinal Content of the 1886 Revelation

The 1886 revelation emphasizes several different gospel principles, but whether its contents were new and significant continues to be fiercely debated. Mormon scholar D. Michael Quinn assessed: "As a historian, I find that there is abundant evidence to demonstrate that the 1886 revelation occurred … however, in my view, [it] really added nothing to any of the revelations that had been given on plural marriage."[3]

Transcribed and formatted into numbered paragraphs, the 1886 revelation reads:

1. Drew Briney, *Apostles on Trial: Examining the Membership Trials of Apostles Taylor and Cowley* (Utah: Hindsight Publications, 2012), 107; see also Fred Collier and Knut Knutson, eds., *The Trials of Apostle John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley* (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 1987), 10. At his trial in 1911, John W. Taylor explained: "Brother Joseph Robinson came to me and asked for a copy of it upon the suggestion of Brother Cowley and he got it from Brother Badger. Brother Joseph F. Smith Jr., also got a copy, but I don't know how many have got copies from these." Briney, *Apostles on Trial*, 117.

2. See Fred C. Collier, ed., *Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Collier's Publishing, 1981), 1:180–206.

3. D. Michael Quinn, "Plural Marriages After the 1890 Manifesto," talk given at Bluffdale, UT, August 11, 1991. Copy of transcript in possession of the author.

Sept 27, 1886

(1) My son John. you have asked me concerning the new & everlasting covenant & how far it is binding upon my people

(2) Thus saith the Lord all commandments that I give must \be obeyed by those calling themselves by my name/ unless they are revoked by my [sic] or by my authority, and

(3) how can I revoke an everlasting covenant;

(4) for I the Lord am everlasting & my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with; but they stand for ever.

(5) Have I not given my word in great plainness on this subject?

(6) Yet have not great numbers of my people been negligent in the observance of my law & the keeping of my commandment, and yet have I borne with them these many years & this because of their weakness because of the perilous times & furthermore, it is more pleasing to \ me/ that men should use their free agency in regard to these matters.

(7) Nevertheless I the Lord do not change & my word and my covenants & my law do not.

(8) & as I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph all those who would enter into my glory must & shall obey my law.

(9) & have I not commanded men that if they were Abraham's seed & would enter into my glory, they must do the works of Abraham.

(10) I have not revoked this law nor will I for it is everlasting & those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof, even so amen.[4]

A review of the ten paragraphs in the transcription above demonstrates that the revelation on celestial and plural marriage dictated by Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843, now LDS Doctrine and Covenants (D&C)

4. Collier, *Unpublished Revelations*, 1:145–46. Joseph White Musser, *The Four Hidden Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Truth Publishing, [1948]), 15, paragraph divisions by this author.

section 132, is quoted or paraphrased in several places. For example, both emphasize the need to obey the law and covenant in order to "enter into [God's] glory" (see D&C 132:4, 27). Also, both revelations contain the admonition to "do the works of Abraham" (D&C 132:32 and 1886 revelation, para. 9).

Elsewhere in the 1886 revelation are important instructions given concerning *covenants*, *laws*, and *commandments*. Paragraphs 3, 4, and 7 instruct that God's *covenants*, including the new and everlasting covenant, do not "change" and cannot be "revoked" or "abrogated." Similarly, paragraphs 7 and 10 state that God's *law* does not "change" and is not "revoked." Paragraphs 8 and 10 explain that to enter into God's glory, His *law* and the *conditions* thereof must be "obeyed." Paragraph 2 instructs that God's *commandments* must be obeyed unless they are "revoked" by Him or by His "authority."

In summary, the 1886 revelation states that God's *laws* (and their *conditions*) as well as His *covenants* do not change and cannot be revoked or abrogated. In contrast, God's *commandments* can be revoked. All three must be obeyed when given by specific revelation.

That God's *commandments* can be revoked is consistent with other scripture. In 1831, the Lord instructed Joseph Smith: "Wherefore I, the Lord, command and revoke, as it seemeth me good" (D&C 56:4), and "I command and men obey not; I revoke and they receive not the blessing" (D&C 58:32). On two occasions, God declared: "I revoke the commandment which was given" (D&C 56:5–6). Elsewhere God revokes a "commission" (D&C 75:6) and intimates that a "judgment" and a "decree" might be revoked (D&C 19:5, 61:19), but nowhere in the standard works is a covenant or law revoked.

These observations are important because if the practice of plural marriage was either a law or covenant, or a "condition of the law," then, according to the 1886 revelation, it could never be revoked, abrogated, or suspended, and the manifestos would have been plainly contradictory to this revelation. On the other hand, if the practice of plural marriage was a commandment, then it could be revoked but not without a

penalty upon the "rebellious" who were preventing compliance with the commandment (see for example D&C 56:4).[5]

The Mormon Fundamentalist Interpretation

The significance of the 1886 revelation to most Mormon fundamentalists is based in part upon their interpretations of its message. Polygamist writer Ogden Kraut affirmed: "The content of this [1886] revelation … was of most significance, because the information revealed has served as a guide ever since."[6] The general opinion of Mormon fundamentalists seems to be that plural marriage was a "law" and, therefore, could never be revoked or suspended. Lynn L. Bishop affirmed: "In the revelation to John Taylor, dated September 27, 1886, the Lord said that he had not, could not and would not revoke the Law of Abraham which is Plural Marriage.… The Lord has commanded in no uncertain terms that we must obey this law of Celestial Marriage, that is plural marriage, in order to obtain exaltation."[7] According to writer/compiler Gilbert Fulton, "The Lord said He would not revoke the law of celestial plural marriage in 1886."[8] The authors of *Voices in Harmony* quote the revelation adding their own brackets: "I have not revoked this law [plural marriage], nor will I."[9]

In 1940, polygamous leader Joseph W. Musser summed up the common view embraced by modern polygamists concerning the 1886 revelation: "Here the Lord very clearly and definitely says, that in order to enter into His glory, men MUST live the law of plural marriage. He makes no exceptions. There are no 'ifs' nor 'ands' about it. 'All those who would enter into my glory MUST and SHALL obey my law.' And 'my

5. Since the vast majority of LDS church members in 1890 were willing to continue defying the US government by perpetuating the illegal practice of plural marriage, the penalty would be upon the "rebellious" government officials who fought the principle and practice.

6. Ogden Kraut, *The Holy Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1997), 6:255.

7. Lynn L. Bishop, *The 1886 Visitations of Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith to John Taylor: The Centerville Meetings* (Salt Lake City: Latter-day Publications, 1998), 63.

8. Gilbert Fulton, *The Most Holy Principle* (Salt Lake City: Gems, 1975), 4:145, italics added.

9. Mary Batchelor, et. al., *Voices in Harmony: Contemporary Women Celebrate Plural Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Principle Voices, 2000), 27.

law,' as the Lord was treating it, is the law of plural marriage" (emphasis in original).[10]

Joseph W. Musser.

More specifically, some modern polygamists affirm that the commandment referred to in the 1886 revelation as well as the conditions of the law (which must be obeyed) all point to plural marriage.[11] Fundamentalist leaders like Leroy Johnson and Rulon C. Allred agreed, indicating that the new and everlasting covenant mentioned here is essentially plural marriage.[12] In addition, fundamentalists may insist that because

10. Joseph W. Musser, "Evidences and Reconciliation," *Truth* 6, no. 7 (December 1940): 158, emphasis in original. See also Joseph Musser, "Another Excommunicant," *Truth* 5, no. 3 (August 1939): 64; Joseph Musser, "Melvin J. Ballard," *Truth* 5, no. 4 (September 1939): 84; Joseph Musser, "Church and State: Answering Judge Oscar W. McConkie," *Truth* 6, no. 2 (July 1940): 42; Joseph Musser, "President John Taylor," *Truth* 6, no. 6 (November 1940): 139; Gilbert Fulton, "The Most Holy Principle," 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Gems Publishing, 1970–75), 4:23, 66; B. Harvey Allred, *A Leaf in Review* (Caldwell, ID: Caxton Printers, 1933), 190.

11. See Kraut, *Holy Priesthood*, 6:255–58. Rulon C. Allred, *Treasures of Knowledge: Selected Discourses and Excerpts from Talks* (Hamilton, MT: Bitterroot Publishing, 1981), 1:89.

12. Leroy S. Johnson, *The L. S. Johnson Sermons*, 7 vols. (Hildale, UT: Twin Cities Courier, 1983–84), 1:211; Allred, *Treasures of Knowledge*, 2:5. See also Dennis R. Short, *Questions on Plural Marriage with a Selected Bibliography and 1600 References* (Salt Lake City: Dennis R. Short, 1974), 6; Bishop, *1886 Visitations of Jesus Christ*, 32. Ogden Kraut wrote: "Plural marriage is a 'new and

Abraham was a polygamist, to "do the *works of Abraham*" requires the practice of plural marriage.[13]

With virtually no disagreement, Mormon fundamentalist leaders and adherents declare that the 1886 document is a genuine revelation that affirms that the directive to practice plural marriage constitutes God's law, a condition of the law, and/or a covenant, and therefore is still binding upon all sincere followers of the restoration. They feel the revelation vindicates their attempts to practice polygamy after the 1904 Manifesto when church president Joseph F. Smith stopped authorizing new plural sealings for the living.[14]

An Alternate Interpretation

An alternate interpretation raises questions whether plural marriage has ever been a law or covenant. For example, a search of LDS scriptures fails to identify even one reference to a "law of plural marriage." It also appears that Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, John Taylor, nor any other early Utah church leader ever mentioned it.[15] William Clayton recalled that Joseph taught about the "doctrine of plural and celestial marriage," adding the prophet explained that it "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 fullness of exaltation in celestial glory."[16] Clayton's recollection classifies plural marriage as a

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everlasting covenant.' Therefore, no mortal man will ever receive any keys to lock up the practice of that principle or do away with it." *Holy Priesthood*, 6:258.

13. Joseph Musser, "Consistent Loyalty," *Truth* 2, no. 1 (June 1936): 8; Joseph Musser, "Slanderous Statement Refuted," *Truth* 2, no. 8 (January 1937): 118.

14. Proxy sealings for the *dead* have continued uninterrupted for both monogamous and polygamous marriages in LDS temples since the ceremony was first performed in the Nauvoo Temple in 1845. See Lisle Brown, *Nauvoo Sealings, Adoptions, and Anointings: a Comprehensive Register of Persons Receiving LDS Temple Ordinances, 1841–1846* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006). Eternal plural marriages occur when a widower is sealed to a new living wife or a deceased man is vicariously sealed to one or more women who are also dead.

15. Throughout church history, there are a few scattered references to the "law of plural marriage" made by men such as Benjamin F. Johnson and Franklin D. Richards, and, more recently, Bruce R. McConkie, and by authors in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*. Francis M. Lyman spoke of the "law of plural marriage" saying, "The law will stand forever, but the practice was discontinued." Collier and Knutson, *Trials of John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley*, 9.

16. Andrew Jenson, "Plural Marriage," *Historical Record* 6 (July 1887): 226, italics added; Dennis R. Short, *Questions on Plural Marriage*, 559.

"doctrine" and a "principle" but not a "law" or "covenant." Similarly, Orson Pratt originally used the terms "principle" and "doctrine" to describe the practice of plural marriage when he publicly announced it on August 29, 1852.[17]

In 1883, three years prior to receiving his revelation, Taylor explained that there is a "law of celestial marriage," but that plural marriage is different, being a "principle" that is "associated with it": "He [God] has told us about our wives and our children being sealed to us, that we might have a claim on them in eternity. He has revealed unto us the *law* of celestial marriage, associated with which is the *principle* of plural marriage.... It is one of the greatest blessings that ever was conferred upon the human family. It is an eternal *law* which has always existed in other worlds as well as in this world."[18]

A computerized search of the *Journal of Discourses* reveals that the "law of plurality" is mentioned once by apostle Orson Pratt and once by apostle George A. Smith.[19] There is also a single reference to "law of polygamy" by John Taylor.[20] A reference to a "law of plural marriage" is similarly found only once, uttered by apostle Franklin D. Richards in an October 1885 sermon.[21] Other church members, like Eliza R. Snow, Benjamin F. Johnson, and Andrew Jenson, used the term, but apparently there are no known secret teachings, public sermons, or official declarations that discuss a "*law* of plural marriage."[22]

Statements made between 1852 and 1890 can be quoted out of context in order to create the appearance that church leaders taught of a law of plural marriage or something akin to it. Perhaps the most common

17. Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:53–54. *The Journal of Discourses* is a twenty-six-volume collection of public sermons by early leaders of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS church). The first editions of the *Journal* were published in England by George D. Watt, the stenographer of Brigham Young. Publication began in 1854 and ended in 1886. The *Journal of Discourses* can be located online at the BYU Harold B. Lee Library Collections website, http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/cdm/ref/collection/JournalOfDiscourses3/id/1913.

18. John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 24:229, italics added.

19. Orson Pratt, *Journal of Discourses*, 6:352–53; George Albert Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 13:39–40.

20. John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:317.

21. Franklin D. Richards, *Journal of Discourses*, 26:342–43.

22. Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1884), 485; Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Mesa, AZ: 21st Century Printing, n.d.), 9; Andrew Jenson, ed., *LDS Biographical Encyclopedia*, (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson Historical, 1901–36), 1:144, 174, 254, 332, 358, 400, 404, etc.

quotation so cited is from Brigham Young who stated in 1866: "The only men who become Gods, even the Sons of God, are those who enter into polygamy. Others attain unto a glory and may even be permitted to come into the presence of the Father and the Son; but they cannot reign as kings in glory."[23]

Multiple fundamentalist authors assert that Brigham Young meant that all men in the celestial kingdom are practicing polygamists, implying that plural marriage is an eternal law applicable to all men on earth.[24] However, earlier in the very same discourse Young provided context telling the congregation: "If you desire with all your hearts to obtain the blessings which Abraham obtained, you will be polygamists *at least in your faith*, or you will come short of enjoying the salvation and the glory which Abraham has obtained."[25] Brigham Young pointed out that men and women must "be polygamists," but that they must do so "at least in [their] faith," in order to receive the blessings Abraham enjoys.

23. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:269.

24. See Fulton, *Most Holy Principle*, 1:160, 4:150; Kraut, *Holy Priesthood*, 2:51, 6:275; Eslie Jenson to Melvin J. Ballard, 15 July 1934, quoted in Joseph W. Musser, *Marriage: Ballard/Jenson Correspondence*, (n.p., 1935), 7; Joseph Musser, *The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (n.p., 1933), 34; Joseph Musser, "Unholy Subterfuges," *Truth* 1, no. 5 (April 1936): 151; Joseph Musser, "Plural Marriage: The Mormon Marriage System," *Truth* 2, no. 2 (July 1936): 17; Joseph Musser, "He Hath Denied the Faith," *Truth* 4, no. 4 (September 1938): 70; Joseph Musser, "Revelation," *Truth* 4, no. 5 (October, 1938): 96; Joseph Musser, "Adam God Controversy," *Truth* 4, no. 8 (January 1939): 155; Joseph Musser, "Contradictions," *Truth* 4, no. 10 (March 1939): 196; Joseph Musser, "The Manifesto Imbroglio," *Truth* 5, no. 4 (September, 1939): 87; Anne Wilde, *An Essential for Exaltation: Celestial Plural Marriage Essential for the Highest Degree of the Celestial Kingdom* (Salt Lake City: Pioneer Press, 1998), 40; Robert R. Openshaw, *The Notes: Or Selected References on the Fulness of the Gospel for Saints and Other Interested Students* (Pinesdale, MT: Bitterroot Publishing, 1980), 1:293.

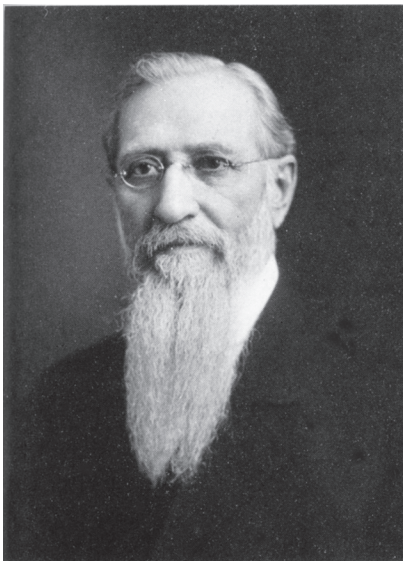
25. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 11:268–269, italics mine.

Brigham Young.
(Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

A similar statement comes from an 1878 discourse by Joseph F. Smith, who taught:

> Some people have supposed that the doctrine of plural marriage was a sort of superfluity, or non-essential, to the salvation or exaltation of mankind. In other words, some of the Saints have said, and believe, that a man with one wife, sealed to him by the authority of the Priesthood for time and eternity, will receive an exaltation as great and glorious, if he is faithful, as he possibly could with more than one. I want here to enter my solemn protest against this idea, for I know it is false.[26]

26. Joseph F. Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:28.



Joseph F. Smith.
(Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

When isolated from the discourse, this quotation might support that plural marriage was a law or that all men, irrespective of when and where they lived, are required to enter plural marriage to be exalted.[27] However, at the beginning of the same sermon Smith clarified:

> It [plural marriage] is a principle that pertains to eternal life, in other words, to endless lives, or eternal increase. It is a law of the Gospel pertaining to the celestial kingdom, applicable to all gospel dispensations, when commanded and not otherwise, and neither acceptable to God or binding on man unless given by commandment, not only so

27. This view is reflected by numerous fundamentalist authors. See Joseph Leslie Broadbent, comp., *Celestial Marriage?* (Salt Lake City: Shepard Book, 1929), 16–17; B. Harvey Allred, *A Leaf in Review*, 142; Fulton, *Most Holy Principle*, 1:209, 3:84, 4:9; Eslie Jenson to Melvin J. Ballard, 15 January 1935, quoted in Musser, *Marriage: Ballard/Jenson Correspondence*, 36; Ogden Kraut, *Holy Priesthood*, 4:226; Joseph W. Musser, *New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage*, 25, 36; Joseph W. Musser, "Mormon and Polygamy," *Truth* 2, no. 11 (April 1937): 177; Joseph W. Musser, "Contrasts," *Truth* 3, no. 12 (May 1938): 208; Joseph W. Musser, "Celestial or Plural Marriage," *Truth* 3, no. 9 (February 1938): 150; Joseph W. Musser, "He Hath Denied the Faith," *Truth* 4, no. 4 (September 1938): 70; Joseph W. Musser, "Contradictions," *Truth* 4, no. 5 (March 1939): 96; Joseph W. Musser, "Celestial Marriage: the Mormon Marriage System," *Truth* 5, no. 2 (July 1939): 43; Openshaw, *The Notes*, 293.

> given in this dispensation, but particularly adapted to the conditions and necessities thereof, and to the circumstances, responsibilities, and personal, as well as vicarious duties of the people of God in this age of the world. God has revealed it as a principle particularly suited to the nature of the work we are called to perform.[28]

While Apostle Smith's statement refers to plural marriage as a "law of the Gospel," he also clarifies that it is "applicable" only "when commanded and not otherwise, and neither acceptable to God or binding on man unless given by commandment." Implicit is that God could also command that polygamy no longer be practiced, as happened with Lehi, in the Book of Mormon, who was told, without any apparent provocation, that he was to be a monogamist (Jacob 3:5).[29] Despite a few scattered references by church members, it does not appear that plural marriage was considered to be a law by early priesthood leaders.

The revelation dictated by Joseph Smith on July 12, 1843 (now LDS D&C 132) helps to clarify whether the law mentioned in both revelations is a "law of plural marriage." It also addresses the question of whether the "new and everlasting covenant" is polygamy:

> 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 … 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

28. Joseph F. Smith, *Journal of Discourses*, 20:26–27, italics added.

29. Some fundamentalist authors have written that Lehi and his families were in fact polygamists, but after arriving in America, iniquity and whoredoms arose causing the Lord to withdraw the privilege. See Joseph Musser, *Celestial or Plural Marriage*, 22; Joseph W. Musser, "The Book of Mormon and Polygamy," *Truth* 3, no. 11 (April 1938): 177–83; Joseph W. Musser, "The Book of Mormon and Polygamy," *Truth* 15, no. 11 (April 1950): 297. However, this is incorrect. Prior to his death (circa 588–570 BC, according to 2 Nephi 4:12), Lehi received a commandment from God to have only one wife (see Jacob 3:5). The abominations of the Nephites occurred decades later (circa 544–421 BC, according to Jacob 2:23) In other words, the commandment to have only one wife was given long before Lehi's grandchildren experimented with polygamy. When Lehi's progeny transgressed by taking plural wives, Jacob called the perpetrators to repentance (Jacob 2:23–30). In their defense, they sought to excuse themselves, not because the Lord had permitted their father Lehi to practice polygamy, but "because of the things which were written concerning David, and Solomon his son" (Jacob 2:23). Jacob then reiterated the commandment given years previously to Lehi: "For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife and concubines he shall have none" (Jacob 2:27).

> their heads, which glory shall be a fulness and a continuation of the seeds forever 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.[30]

These two verses discuss exaltation that is offered to "a man" who marries "a wife" by proper authority, so long as they live worthily.[31] Plural marriage is not mentioned or equated with either the law or the new and everlasting covenant. In other words, according to D&C 132:19–20, a monogamous couple can comply with the "law" and "the new and everlasting covenant" and thereby receive exaltation. Therefore, to insist that the "law" or the "new and everlasting covenant" in either revelation is strictly plural marriage is not supported.

Similarly, Brigham Young explained that the new and everlasting covenant was not plural marriage: "All Latter-day Saints enter the new and everlasting covenant when they enter this church. They covenant to cease sustaining, upholding and cherishing the kingdom of the devil and the kingdoms of this world. They enter into the new and everlasting covenant to sustain the Kingdom of God and no other kingdom."[32]

The new and everlasting covenant is the fullness of the gospel because it encompasses all of the covenants required for exaltation. It is perhaps helpful to think of the various covenants and principles as nested within each other, but with different boundaries:

The New and Everlasting Covenant includes

The New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage which includes

The Principle of Plural Marriage

30. D&C 132:19–20, italics added.

31. D&C 132:19–20 is seldom quoted in Mormon fundamentalist literature probably because these verses state, in unambiguous language, that a monogamist couple—married by proper authority and living worthily—will be exalted.

32. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 12:230.

If the "law" is not polygamy, is it possible that a "condition" of the law requires plural marriage? The 1886 revelation states "Those who will enter into my glory must obey the conditions thereof" (para. 10). D&C 132:7 defines those "conditions of the law":

> And verily I say unto you, that *the conditions of this law* are these: All covenants, contracts, bonds, obligations, oaths, vows, performances, connections, associations, or expectations, that are not made and entered into and sealed by the Holy Spirit of promise, *of him who is anointed*, both as well for time and for all eternity, and that too most holy, by revelation and commandment *through the medium of mine anointed*, whom I have appointed on the earth to hold this power (and I have appointed unto my servant Joseph to hold this power in the last days, and there is *never but one on the earth at a time on whom this power and the keys of this priesthood are conferred), are of no efficacy, virtue, or force in and after the resurrection from the dead; for all contracts that are not made unto this end have an end when men are dead* (italics added).

According to this list, plural marriage is not one of the "conditions of this law." Instead, the need for proper authority through "one" man who controls the keys of sealing is emphasized.

As observed above, both the 1886 revelation and Doctrine and Covenants section 132 admonish the Latter-day Saints to "*do the works of Abraham*." According to LDS scriptures, Abraham did many good "works." He sought for the priesthood (Abr. 1:2–3), he presided righteously over his family, he paid his tithing (Alma 13:15), he kept covenants, he received revelation (Abr. 3:11), he sacrificed burnt offerings (Gen. 22:13), he was a missionary (Abr. 1:19), he complied with the commandment of circumcision (Gen. 17:23–26, Acts 7:8), and he married plural wives by proper authority (Gen. 16; D&C 132:37).

It appears that in order to "do" all of Abraham's "works," male believers would need to be circumcised. In addition, followers would be required to sacrifice burnt offerings and marry plural wives by proper authority. However, without genuine priesthood authority, neither sacrificing (see 1 Sam. 15:22) or plural marrying (see D&C 132:18) can be performed. Devotees might perform their own freelance plural marriages or perform self-directed burnt offerings, but those efforts would not constitute "doing the works of Abraham" because they would not be

authorized. The problem with unauthorized plural marriages was illustrated in 1847 when W. W. Phelps returned from a mission to the eastern states where he had married three wives polygamously. His mission companion, Henry B. Jacobs, had performed the plural ceremonies without authorization from Brigham Young. After hearing the story, Young addressed Phelps: "You have been living in adultery— [N]o man can have the 2nd woman unless he ha[s] the consent of the man who holds the sealing power." Phelps was excommunicated and quickly re-baptized after acknowledging his misunderstanding.[33]

The Book of Mormon speaks of polygamy as a "commandment" that may be commanded or not commanded: "For there shall not any man among you have save it be one wife; and concubines he shall have none.... For if I will, saith the Lord of Hosts, raise up seed unto me, *I will command my people*; otherwise they shall hearken unto these things" (Jacob 2:27, 30, italics added). Also, Jacob, the brother of Nephi, referred to "the *commandment* of the Lord, which was given unto our father [Lehi]," which was not a commandment of polygamy, but of monogamy, "that they should have save it were one wife, and concubines they should have none" (Jacob 3:5, italics added). It seems that within a Book of Mormon context, polygamy or monogamy are commandments issued according to God's "will," but neither marriage type is considered a law or covenant.

These observations support that, within the context of Joseph Smith's teachings, plural marriage cannot be accurately characterized as a "law," a "condition of the law," or a "covenant." Instead, historically it has been treated as a "commandment" that could be mandated or revoked.

33. A few months earlier, Young complained of men who would enter into plural marriages by virtue of the authority of "some clod head of an elder" who was willing to perform the sealing ceremony without proper sealing authority from Brigham: "[A man would] go to some woman that does not understand which is right or wrong and tell her that she cannot be saved without a man and he has almighty power and can exalt and save her and ... then go to some clod head of an elder and get him to say their ceremony, all done without the knowledge or counsel of the authority of this church. This is not right and will not be suffered.... They would even try to pass right by me and go to Jos[eph Smith]. Thinking to get between mine [sic] and the 12." Charles Kelly, ed., *The Journals of John D. Lee 1846–47 and 1859* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1984), 80, entry for 16 February 1847.

The 1886 Revelation to John Taylor		
	Fundamentalist Interpretation	**Alternate Interpretation**
The Law	Law of Plural Marriage	Law of Celestial Marriage, which includes the principle of plural marriage but is not limited to it
Conditions of the Law	Plural Marriage	Proper authority must be used or the covenant (e.g. marriage) is not valid
New and Everlasting Covenant	Plural Marriage	All covenants entered into through baptism and other ordinances
Works of Abraham	Must include Plural Marriage	Some of Abraham's works cannot be performed today like sacrificing burnt offerings and plural marriage
Commandments	Plural Marriage is a commandment that cannot be suspended or revoked	Plural Marriage is a commandment that may be suspended or revoked

The 1886 Revelation and the "One" Man Referenced in D&C 132:7

Understandably, no one has suggested that the 1886 revelation alone could authorize any priesthood holder to seal marriages (either monogamous or polygamous) without the authority of the "one" man mentioned in D&C 132:7. At John W. Taylor's trial for his church membership in

1911, apostle Orson F. Whitney acknowledged that, "There is no authority as far as I can see, in that [1886] revelation, no authority given to man to exercise such authority in marrying anyone."[34] John W. Taylor did not disagree.[35] His father, church president John Taylor, observed that proper authority is paramount: "With regard to the law of Celestial Marriage, there are certain safeguards thrown around it, as there always were, and those safeguards are and always were, in the hands of the proper authorities and Priesthood delegated by God to man for the protection and preservation and right use of this most important, sacred, exalting and eternal ceremony or covenant."[36]

John W. Taylor.
(Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

In a letter to a man who had apostatized from the church, apostle Melvin J. Ballard explained in 1934: "If the Lord had wanted plural marriage to continue according to the interpretations some give of President Taylor's [1886] revelation, he would have allowed President Taylor

34. Collier and Knutson, T*rials of John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley*, 12.
35. Ibid.
36. John Taylor, *On Marriage* (n.p., n.d.), 5; John Taylor, *Gospel Kingdom*, comp. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1943), 279–80.

to have lived and enforced it but He took him and raised up President Wilford Woodruff who was inspired to give the Manifesto."[37]

While different opinions exist regarding the significance of the 1886 revelation, it might be argued that only one view really matters. That is the interpretation of the "one" man designated in D&C 132:7, 18, and 19, who must authorize all eternal sealings. His opinion is the only one with any practical importance because he alone controls the power to continue or discontinue the practice of plural marriage.[38] No valid plural marriages can be performed without his permission (D&C 132:18). Individuals, congregations, and whole churches could disagree, but together or separately they are incapable of producing authority to seal plural matrimonies that God would recognize (according to Joseph Smith's teachings). Similarly, it does not appear that personal revelation, sincerity, and/or tradition could circumvent the need to access the sealing authority of the "one" man in order to solemnize an eternal marriage or plural marriage.

The question arises whether Joseph Smith's doctrines include the possibility that God would send a new "dispensation" of sealing authority from the heavens bestowing the priesthood keys upon someone outside of the church. Joseph Smith was told several times that he was the recipient of the *last* dispensation (D&C 27:13, 112:30, 32), indicating that a continuous line of authority would exist up to Christ's millennial visit. Brigham Young supported this view: "The Lord Almighty leads this Church, and he will never suffer you to be led astray if you are found doing your duty. You may go home and sleep as sweetly as a babe in its

37. Letter dated 31 December 1934, quoted in Joseph W. Musser, *Ballard-Jenson Correspondence* (n.p., 1935), 27.

38. The need for the authorization from the key holder as described in D&C 132:18 might be illustrated in a story about a group of teens playing baseball. After many hours of exertion and enjoyment, they congregate on the pitcher's mound to decide if they should quit or play more innings. Just then, the boy who owns the groups' only baseball grabs the ball and states: "I'm going home now." He walks away with the ball leaving the other athletes. At that point, the remaining baseball players could share strong testimonies that they should keep playing or they could engage in a group prayer. They might feel strong personal burnings that they should not stop. Regardless, they could not proceed because they have no baseball. They might proceed using a rock, or dirt clod, or apple in place of a ball. Yet, they would not be playing true baseball but rather a counterfeit. Similarly, it seems that the only opinion that matters regarding the significance of the 1886 revelation or the 1890 and 1904 manifestos is the opinion of the key holder mentioned in D&C 132:7, 18, 19.

mother's arms, as to any danger of your leaders leading you astray, for if they should try to do so the Lord would quickly sweep them from the earth."[39] Wilford Woodruff agreed and told the Saints that "the Lord will never permit me nor any other man who stands as the President of this Church, to lead you astray. It is not in the program. It is not in the mind of God. If I were to attempt that, the Lord would remove me out of my place, and so He will any other man who attempts to lead the children of men astray from the oracles of God and from their duty."[40]

Most Mormon fundamentalists acknowledge the need for proper priesthood authority to perform valid plural marriages.[41] While some, like Eldon Kingston or James Harmston, claimed a new dispensation of sealing keys directly from the heavens, most fundamentalist groups defend their own specific line of authority through ordinations back to Joseph Smith.[42] The LeBarons asserted a priesthood lineage through Benjamin F. Johnson and A. Dayer LeBaron.[43] In contrast, the largest group of adherents embraces the teachings of Lorin C. Woolley regarding 1886 ordinations.

A September 26–27, 1886, Visitation of Joseph Smith to John Taylor

During the night of September 26–27, 1886, John Taylor was staying at the home of Lorin Woolley's father, John W. Woolley, in Centerville, Utah, hiding from federal law officials who were prosecuting polygamists. Lorin Woolley stated that on that night, Taylor received a visitation from the deceased prophet Joseph Smith during "all the night," which he discussed with Lorin the following morning. In the years after the incident, Lorin shared his recollections with family and friends. Lorin's half-brother, George E. Woolley, wrote of the report in a 1921 letter

39. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 9:289.

40. Wilford Woodruff, in *Collected Discourse: Delivered by President Wilford Woodruff, His Two Counselors, the Twelve Apostles and Others*, ed. Brian Stuy (Salt Lake City: B. H. S. Publishing, 1987–92), 2:137.

41. A small percentage of Mormon fundamentalists, called "independents," assume a position that they can solemnize valid plural marriages independent of the priesthood authority professed by formalized polygamous groups.

42. See the chart on the homepage of www.MormonFundamentalism.com.

43. Brian C. Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism: The Generations after the Manifesto* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2006), 405–31.

to another half-brother, Orson Woolley, then living in Canada: "Soon after I [George E. Woolley] came from my mission [May 1891] Lorin related to me certain things that happened at his father's house when Pres. Taylor was making his headquarters there during the crusade. He told me of Pres. Taylor coming from his room one morning with a halo about him & that they could scarcely look upon him That this light remained about his person most of the day gradually fading as the day advanced. That Pres. Taylor announced that he had been with the Prophet Joseph all the night."[44]

In 1912, Lorin C. Woolley recorded a signed version of the experience and filed it with the LDS Church Historian's Office:

> In the latter part of September, 1886, the exact day being not now known to me, President John Taylor was staying at the home of my father, John W. Woolley, in Centerville, Davis County, Utah.
>
> At the particular time herein referred to, President Taylor was in hiding (on the under-ground). Charles H. Bearrell and I were the "guardsmen" on watch for the protection of the President. Two were usually selected each night, and they took turns standing guard to protect the President from trespass or approaching danger. Exceptional activity was exercised by the US Federal Officers in their prosecutions of the Mormon people on account of their family relations in supposed violation of the Federal Laws.
>
> Soon after our watch began, Charles H. Bearrell reclined on a pallet and went to sleep. President Taylor had entered the south room to retire for the night. There was no door-way entrance to the room occupied by President Taylor, except the entrance from the room occupied by the guardsmen. Soon after 9 o'clock, I heard the voice of another man engaged in conversation with President Taylor, and I observed that a very brilliant light was illuminating the room occupied by the president. I wakened Bearrell and told him what I had heard and seen, and we both remained awake and on watch the balance of the night. The conversation was carried on all night between President Taylor and the visitor, and never discontinued until the day began to

44. George E. Woolley to Orson A. Woolley, 20 May 1921, George E. Woolley Papers, MS 12300, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter cited as Church History Library. I am grateful to Don Bradley who located this document and made the transcription used here.

dawn–when it ceased and the light disappeared. We heard the voices in conversation while the conference continued and we saw the light.
My father came into the room where we were on watch, and was there when President Taylor came into the room that morning. As the President entered the room he remarked, "I had a very pleasant conversation all night with the Prophet Joseph." At the time President Taylor entered the room his countenance was very bright and could be seen for several hours after. After observing that someone was in conversation with the President, I went out and examined all of the windows, and found them fastened as usual.
The brethren were considerably agitated about this time over the agitation about Plural Marriage, and some were insisting that the Church issue some kind of edict to be used in Congress, concerning the surrendering of Plural Marriage, and that if some policy were not adopted to relieve the strain the government would force the Church to surrender. Much was said in their deliberations for and against some edict or manifesto that had been prepared, and at a meetingthat afternoon, at which a number there were present: ~~George Q. Cannon, John T. Caine, Hiram B. Clawson, Charles H. Wilcken, John W. Woolley~~[45] and myself, I heard President Taylor say; "Brethren, I will suffer my right hand to be cut off before I will sign such a document."
I, Lorin Woolley, of Centerville, Utah, do hereby certify that I have carefully made and read the foregoing statement of facts and the same is true to the best of my knowledge. Dated this 6th day of October, 1912.
(signed) Lorin Woolley[46]

45. The strikeouts are present in the original statement. See "Statement of Facts," statement on file in the Church History Library, reproduced in J. Max Anderson, *The Polygamy Story: Fiction and Fact* (Salt Lake City: Publishers Press, 1979), 32.
46. Lorin Woolley, "Statement of Facts," 1912, Church History Library.

Lorin C. Woolley.
(Courtesy of the Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints)

Lorin C. Woolley Recalled Additional Important Details in the 1920s

A few years after recording the 1912 account, Lorin Woolley remembered new details that greatly amplified the significance of the described visitation of Joseph Smith to John Taylor. Those particulars were compiled into a narrative by Joseph Musser in 1929 and signed by Lorin Woolley.[47] (See "The 1929 Standard Account," in the appendix at the end of this chapter.[48] The new details included:

47. See Joseph W. Musser Journals, 22 September and 6, 8, 9 October, Church History Library.

48. See the "1929 Standard Account" of John Taylor's 1886 revelation by Lorin Woolley, first published in Joseph W. Musser, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1934), 56–62; Hales, *Modern Polygamy and Mormon Fundamentalism*, 479–82; J. Max Anderson, "The Polygamy Story: Fiction and Fact," the SHIELDS website, accessed December 22, 2014, http://www.shields-research.org/Books/Polygamy_Story/LDS-Funde_Polygamy_Story-c01.htm.

A precise date was given: September 27, 1886.

An eight-hour meeting was held that day.

Thirteen people attended the meeting.

Those in attendance were put under covenant to "consecrate their lives, liberty and property" defending the "principle of Celestial or Plural Marriage."

The 1886 revelation was recorded during the meeting.

Five copies of the 1886 revelation were made.

After the meeting, five men were given authority to continue plural marriage independent of the church's actions.

The five men were put "under covenant that while we lived we would see to it that no year passed by without children being born in the principle of plural marriage."

A precise date was given

Woolley's 1912 account contains no date, beginning with the statement, "In the latter part of September, 1886, the exact day being not now known to me." However, the 1929 account describes September 26, 1886, for the visitation and the 27th for the meeting and ordinations. It does specify the source of that dating information.

An eight-hour meeting was held on that date

Both of Woolley's 1912 and 1929 accounts report an angelic visitation to John Taylor on the evening of September 26. New, however, was the narrative of an eight-hour meeting the next morning: "We had no breakfast, but assembled ourselves in a meeting. I forget who opened the meeting. I was called to offer the benediction. I think my father, John W. Woolley, offered the opening prayer.... The meeting was held from about nine o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon without in-

termission, being about eight-hours in all."[49] Woolley described remarkable things happening during the meeting:

> President Taylor called the meeting to order. He had the Manifesto, that had been prepared under the direction of George Q. Cannon, read over again … he placed his finger on the document, his person rising from the floor about a foot or eighteen inches, and with countenance animated by the Spirit of the Lord, and raising his right hand to the square, he said, Sign that document, –never. I would suffer my right hand to be severed from my body first. Sanction it, –never. I would suffer my tongue to be torn from its roots in my mouth before I would sanction it.[50]

Thirteen people attended the meeting

Lorin Woolley listed the names of thirteen people who were in attendance that Monday: "President Taylor, George Q. Cannon, L. John Nuttall, John W. Woolley, Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, Charles Birrell, Daniel R. Bateman, Bishop Samuel Sedden, George Earl, my mother, Julia E. Woolley, my sister, Amy Woolley, and myself."[51] The 1912 account included only five names (besides Lorin and John Taylor), but all five are crossed out, presumably by Lorin, but for an unknown reason. The five stricken names are John T. Caine and Hiram B. Clawson, who are not on the 1929 list of thirteen, and George Q. Cannon, Charles H. Wilcken, and John W. Woolley.

Everyone in attendance was put under covenant to defend plural marriage

The 1929 accounts relates that during the meeting, John Taylor "put each person under covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or Plural Marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle."[52] This covenant would have likely created an

49. Musser, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage*, 56–62.
50. Ibid.
51. Ibid.
52. Ibid.

impression in the minds of those in attendance, motivating them to support the continuation of plural marriage.

The 1886 revelation was recorded during the meeting

John W. Taylor's description of the discovery of the 1886 revelation contains no details regarding how it was received, but Lorin remembered that John Taylor dictated it during the course of the eight hour meeting: "After that he talked for about an hour and then sat down and wrote the revelation which was given him by the Lord upon the question of Plural Marriage."[53]

Five copies of the 1886 revelation were made

Lorin Woolley's 1929 account reports that after writing the original, John Taylor had five additional copies made: "After the meeting referred to, President Taylor had L. John Nuttall write five copies of the revelation. He called five of us together: Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, George Q. Cannon, John W. Woolley, and myself.... He then gave each of us a copy of the Revelation."[54] Rulon C. Allred taught in 1970: "Every member of the Twelve [Apostles] who was available was taken to President Taylor's hiding place, and the revelation was read to them and accepted by them."[55] No evidence has been found supporting Allred's declaration.[56]

After the meeting, five men were given authority to continue plural marriage independent of the church's actions and put under covenant to do so

Unarguably, the most important detail added by Lorin Woolley in his 1929 account was that after the meeting, special ordinations occurred

53. Ibid.
54. Ibid.
55. Allred, *Treasures of Knowledge*, 1:14.
56. Wilford Woodruff's daily journal entries between September 27, 1886, and John Taylor's death on July 25, 1887, record no meeting or attempt to meet for any reason. See Scott G. Kenney, ed. *Wilford Woodruffs Journal*, 9 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983–85), 2:235; see B. H. Roberts, ed., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1960), 8:404–47.

wherein he and four others received authority to continue plural marriage and were placed under a solemn covenant:

> He [John Taylor] called five of us together: Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, George Q. Cannon, John W. Woolley, and myself. He then set us apart[57] and place us under covenant that while we lived we would see to it that no year passed by without children being born in the principle of plural marriage. We were given authority to ordain others if necessary to carry this work on, they in turn to be given authority to ordain others when necessary, under the direction of the worthy senior (by ordination), so that there should be no cessation in the work.
>
> John Taylor set the five mentioned apart and gave them authority to perform marriage ceremonies, and also to set others apart to do the same thing as long as they remained on the earth.[58]

Within these two paragraphs, Woolley described a connection to the keys of sealing then held by John Taylor. If true, it would constitute a line of authority outside of the church capable of authorizing plural marriages independent of the president of the church. As such, that authority to seal polygamous matrimonies would have been unaffected when, in April 1904, Joseph F. Smith stopped authorizing any new plural marriages. The FLDS church, Allred Group, and several smaller offshoots claim their sealing authority through Woolley's described ordinations.

Problems with Details in Lorin Woolley's 1929 Account

Several of the new historical details remembered by Lorin Woolley in the 1920s regarding the activities of September 26 and 27, 1886, are problematic, including his recollections of: (1) a meeting (of any kind or duration) on September 27, 1886, (2) the creation of five copies of the revelation, (3) five men receiving priesthood ordinations after the meeting to continue plural marriage independent of the church, and (4) the covenants that attendees made to support and perpetuate plural mar-

57. On September 27, 1932, Musser recorded Woolley saying: "Instructions to the Five: You will have the weight of this world upon you, and one of you will have to stand alone. Joseph S[mith] laid his hands upon the heads while J[ohn] T[aylor] set them apart or acted as mouth." Joseph Musser Journals, Church History Library.

58. Musser, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage*, 61.

riage. In addition, the description of priesthood offices that are higher than and/or independent from the authority held by apostles in the church is problematic, but will not be examined here.[59]

Fundamentalist scholar Drew Briney acknowledges: "It seems most likely that Lorin C. Woolley did not publically noise any specific priesthood claims until after 1918."[60] The new details provided by Lorin Woolley in the 1929 account may have been the result of better remembering. He related: "Many of the things I forgot, but they are coming to me gradually, and those things that come to me are as clear as on the day on which they were given."[61]

Nevertheless, his half-brother was less impressed. In his 1921 letter to his brother Orson, George E. Woolley declared: "I am very certain that had Lorin told me in about 1891 or 1892 such things as are now given out I would have remembered it as such statements would have been in direct opposition to Pres. Woodruffs actions & statements."[62] George apparently believed that during the thirty years after he first heard the account of the 1886 event, Lorin had embellished his original story. Regardless, during the 1920s, Lorin often mentioned the new particulars as he spoke to congregations of dissenters who gathered in homes and even outdoor settings to discuss their disagreements with the policies and teachings of the mother church.

59. The majority of Mormon fundamentalists assert priesthood authority to seal plural marriages through a priesthood council called the Council of Seven Friends, which is, reportedly higher than the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles. It is comprised of "High Priest Apostles." See Lorin Woolley, quoted in Joseph W. Musser's Book of Remembrance (original pp. 47–50, 52–53, 55), as published in *Joseph W. Musser's Book of Remembrance*, ed. Drew Briney (n.p.: Hindsight Publications, 2010), 92–99, 102–5, 108–9; Joseph W. Musser, *A Priesthood Issue* (n.p., [1948]), 10, 17; Mark J. Baird and Rhea A. Kunz Baird, eds., *Reminiscences of John W. and Lorin C. Woolley*, 1st ed. (n.p.: n.d.), 1:4, 6; Joseph White Musser and Joseph Leslie Broadbent, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage: An Interpretation of Celestial Marriage, Plural Marriage, Priesthood* (n.p.: Truth Publishing Co., n.d.), 103, 109.; Lynn L. Bishop and Steven L. Bishop, *The Keys of the Priesthood Illustrated* (Draper, UT: Review and Preview Publishers, 1971), 84–88; "President John Yates Barlow," *Truth* 15, no. 9 (February 1950): 229. Notwithstanding, no evidence for these entities has been found prior to Lorin Woolley's descriptions in the 1920s. See Hales, *Modern Polygamy*, 193–214.

60. Drew Briney, *Silencing Mormon Polygamy* (n.p.: Hindsight Publications, 2008), 189. George E. Woolley to Orson A. Woolley, 20 May 1921, George E. Woolley Papers, MS 12300, Church History Library.

61. Musser, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage*, 60.

62. George E. Woolley to Orson A. Woolley, 20 May 1921, George E. Woolley Papers, MS 12300, Church History Library.

Corroborating a September 27, 1886 eight-hour meeting

One detail absent in Lorin Woolley's 1912 but present in the 1929 account involved an eight-hour meeting attended by thirteen individuals that convened September 27, 1886, the morning after the visitation to John Taylor. On April 9, 1922, Joseph Musser wrote what seems to be the first recorded reference to it in any document published or nonpublished:

> In evening I attended meeting with wife Ellis at [the residence of] Brother [Nathaniel] Baldwin's[63] in East Mill Creek ward.... Brother Woolley occupied most of the time and related the circumstance of the rejection of the manifesto by the late president John Taylor at the home of John Woolley in Davis County. Pres. Taylor had told the brethren—13—in all, that the time would come when the brethren would be handled and ostracized for practicing the principle of the Gospel for which they were then in hiding—plural marriage—but, he said, woe, woe unto those who should do such things.... Brother Woolley was ordained an Elder at the age of 13, and was ordained an Apostle by President John Taylor and Geo. Q. Cannon.[64]

Shortly after this time, a friend, Daniel Bateman, came forward declaring himself a second witness of the eight-hour gathering and signed an affidavit appended to the 1929 account that reads: "The proceedings of the meeting, as related by Brother Woolley, are correct in every detail."

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63. Nathanial Baldwin was an early follower of Lorin C. Woolley. However, Baldwin eventually rejected Woolley's claims. A journal entry for November 13, 1960 reads: "In the afternoon I visited I. W. [Ianthus Winford] Barlow and asked him to tell me again about Lorin Woolley's statement about taking certain [priesthood] keys to the Indians in Mexico. As well as I remember he told me years ago that at one meeting at Broadbent's house Lorin said that he was taken there by a relative in a flying machine and that at a later meeting at the same place, Lorin (evidently reconsidering and seeing there was not time to go there in a flying machine in the short time he was away) told the story differently by saying he was taken there by some of the three Nephites." See Nathaniel Baldwin Journals, 13 November 1960, Church History Library.

64. Musser Journals, 9 April 1922. A month earlier, Musser recorded Daniel Bateman stating in a similar meeting where Lorin was not present: "That on the night of Sept. 26–27 1886 John Taylor received two visitations from the Prophet Joseph Smith and one from Jesus Christ, and he received the revelation which follows below. Pres. Taylor came out of his room and seemed suspended about four feet above the floor, and his face was so radiant with light that he (Bateman) could scarcely look upon him for brightness," but there was no mention of a meeting or ordinations. See entry for 12 March 1922.

The presence of a second witness to the meeting enhances its believability.

Daniel Bateman.

As Woolley described it, the eight-hour meeting was impressive in many ways. A meeting of that length "without intermission" to address one topic would have been unusual. Even more remarkable is the report that "while President Taylor was talking to us, he frequently arose and stood above the floor." Specifically, "his person [was raised] from the floor about a foot or eighteen inches." In addition, "his countenance and being were so enveloped by light and glory that it was difficult for us to look upon him."[65] Lorin later recalled another interesting detail: "At time of meeting held by John Taylor, September 27, 1886, during the meeting, singing was heard, first by only four or five of the thirteen present, the last song being heard by all present. A quartet sang, 'The Birth of Christ,' and a double quartet sang 'Birth of JS' and the 'Seer,' two or three other songs were sung. The singing was beautiful. President Taylor

65. "1929 Standard Account." See appendix at the end of this chapter.

remarked after singing ceased: 'That is the first time I have heard a heavenly choir.'"[66]

The whole scene is further enhanced by the described reception of a God-given revelation during the proceedings that would have provided a capstone memory guaranteeing that none of the thirteen would easily forget the events or the covenants they entered into that day. It probably would have constituted the most impressive religious experience of their lives.

The particulars of the meeting as recalled by Woolley are apparently unparalleled in any other religious assembly of the restoration.[67] In no other gathering do we learn of a leader rising above the floor with shining countenance, heavenly music, and a revelation. No church leader, including Joseph Smith, left recollections of a comparable occurrence. Within the restoration's recorded annals of heavenly interventions in the latter days, the September 27, 1886 meeting described by Woolley deserves special recognition, if accurately recounted.

One might imagine that since no admonition was given to keep the eight-hour meeting secret, the knowledge of it, along with the directives then communicated, might have quickly spread throughout Mormondom.[68] Latter-day Saints reeling on the underground, due to the increasing federal prosecution of polygamists, would have been buoyed by the knowledge that God was still leading his prophet and requiring their continued compliance. Even if cautiously whispered in clandestine communications by those in hiding, the message borne from the thirteen participants of the eight-hour meeting would have endowed listeners with added courage and determination to stay the course against governmental opposition.

66. Musser, *Book of Remembrance*, 70, in Briney, *Musser's Book of Remembrance*, 138–39.

67. Benjamin F. Johnson related in 1903 that when addressing members of the twelve apostles and other "select friends," Joseph Smith "raised himself from the floor." Fundamentalist author Lynn L. Bishop suggests this was "possibly similar" to John Taylor's described rise above the floor in the eight-hour meeting. See Bishop, *The Centerville Meetings*, 230. However, Johnson's language is ambiguous. The Spirit didn't raise him; Joseph Smith "raised himself." It appears that no other accounts of that gathering or any available historical narrative specifically state Joseph Smith rose from off the floor while preaching.

68. Drew Briney incorrectly states that the attendees at the described eight-hour meeting were "sworn to secrecy." See Briney, *Silencing Mormon Polygamy*, 168. None of the available accounts state that those in attendance covenanted or were otherwise admonished to keep the proceedings secret.

Despite the meeting's probable impact in the lives of thirteen attendees, it is surprising that no contemporaneous evidence for its occurrence has been found. The journal entries of the three participants who kept diaries covering those dates, Samuel Bateman, George Q. Cannon, and L. John Nuttall (scribing for President Taylor), have been published.[69] No reference to a meeting or supernatural experience with John Taylor on September 27, 1886 (or any date in the weeks before or after) is found. Both Samuel Bateman and L. John Nuttall recorded that President Taylor spent time "pitching quoits" (playing horseshoes) that day.[70] The lack of corroboration has caused some fundamentalist authors to suggest that coded messages in the diaries mention the meeting.[71] However, no coded messages can be discerned in the straightforward and internally and externally consistent records. Another suggestion is that the dating scheme may be in error and that the meeting was held on another date.[72]

Regardless, it is puzzling that the meeting created no discernable stir or excitement among the thirteen men and women who reportedly witnessed it. No mention of the proceedings is found in any letter or diary from that era, no secondhand retellings, and no rumors or stories were echoed by devout pluralists. The lack of any contemporaneous references in the historical record indicates the described meeting must have flashed upon the scene, colliding with the quiet spiritual status quo of the participants, and then disappeared into thin air. All available documents fail to identify a resurgence of faith and a revival of determination in the fall of 1886 arising as a consequence of an experience of president John Taylor with the Divine that was witnessed by more than a dozen people.

This is not to say that rumors of extra-worldly visitations did not exist at that time on the Utah frontier. The journal of John Moon Cle-

69. See Samuel Bateman Diaries, 27 September 1886, Church History Library; George Q. Cannon Journal, 26 September 1886, First Presidency vault, Salt Lake City; Jedediah S. Rogers, *In the President's Office: The Diaries of L. John Nuttall, 1879–1892* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2007), 170; and Anderson, *Polygamy Story*, 34, 45–47. See also Briney, *Silencing Mormon Polygamy*, 192n2.

70. Ibid.

71. Bishop and Bishop, *The Keys of the Priesthood Illustrated*, 172–73.

72. Lynn L. Bishop also acknowledged the chronology problems and suggests that "It is certainly possible that the date may not only have been earlier than the 27th of September, but may also have been in a different month than September." Bishop, 1886 *Visitations of Jesus Christ*, 291.

ments recorded two months earlier on July 31, 1886 reads: "Went to the High Priests meeting held in the Font house. Philo Dibble spoke of this being the resurrection day. And that Joseph Smith had been to Prest. John Taylor and conversed in his body with him about this crusade against us."[73]

This visit may have occurred in the home of John Carlisle where John Taylor concealed himself several times in 1885 and early 1886.[74] It is believed by many in the Carlisle family that Joseph Smith appeared to John Taylor in the Carlisle home while Alfred Carlisle, a son of John Carlisle, was standing guard. Alfred Carlisle's niece recorded the story:

> One night he [Alfred Carlisle] was asked by President Taylor to stand guard at the upstairs bedroom where he was going to spend the night. He entered the room alone and bolted the door from the inside. It had a heavy bolt lock that was on the door many years later while I lived in the home. During the night it sounded as if two people were talking in the room and when President Taylor came out alone the next morning my uncle told him about hearing voices. He told him he had been conversing with the Prophet Joseph Smith. He also showed my uncle the ugly scar on his body where he was wounded while in Carthage jail with the prophet. My uncle felt these experiences were given to him for a purpose so he could testify of what he had seen and heard.[75]

Despite scattered stories like this account, no similar rumors were circulating at that time that might have corroborated Lorin Woolley's narrative of the eight-hour meeting in the fall of 1886.

In summary, explaining the thirty-five-year silence that followed the reported meeting and the lack of any discernable contemporaneous record or impact in the lives of the described participants depicts a problematic scenario raising plausibility questions.[76] Perhaps additional evidence will be found to substantiate that a crucial gathering occurred

73. Journal of John Moon Clements, Church History Library.

74. Daniel Bateman testified of this divine visitation. See Musser Journals, 18 July 1938.

75. "The John Carlisle and William H. Hill Homes," mimeographed sheet, 1978, Church History Library.

76. By pre-dating a May 20, 1921 letter from George E. Woolley to his brother Orson A. Woolley, listing it as "9/22/1891" in the text, Drew Briney implies "1891" documentation of the reported September 27, 1886, eight-hour meeting and priesthood ordinations. See Briney, *Silencing Mormon Polygamy*, 172, 188. However, no evidence has been found that Woolley or anyone else mentioned the all-day meeting or any of its remarkable proceedings prior to the 1920s.

in the fall of 1886, possibly revealing that all in attendance were sworn to keep the meeting a secret and to not allow it to alter their outward behavior, even though such constraints were not mentioned by Woolley or Bateman.[77] Without the introduction of new credible evidence, important questions persist concerning Lorin Woolley's description of an eight-hour meeting on September 27, 1886.

Five copies of the 1886 revelation?

Lorin Woolley affirmed in his 1929 statement that after John Taylor penned the 1886 revelation, he immediately commissioned five copies be made and given to Samuel Bateman, Charles Wilcken, George Q. Cannon, Lorin Woolley, and his father John. Unfortunately, none of those five copies has been located or otherwise seen, nor have contemporaneous or later references to them been found in the historical record.

It seems that such manuscripts would be prized gifts from John Taylor that would have been carefully preserved, serving as inspiration to polygamists on the underground and Mormon fundamentalists in later decades. The five possessors of the documents would have likely shared them with interested inquirers, since no limitations were apparently made on circulating them among believers. However, no journal entry, letter, or other reference to their existence is made prior to Lorin Woolley's 1920s claims.

John W. Taylor's testimony that he found the original copy of the 1886 revelation on his father's desk after his death, does not directly conflict with Lorin Woolley's 1929 account. It is possible that after the meeting, each of the six copies (the original plus five duplicates), traveled with their respective owners, so that John Taylor retained the manuscript his son John W. located. However, the only copy mentioned in historical records during the period between 1887 (President John Taylor's death) and 1911 is the one identified by John W. Taylor during his disciplinary council meeting.[78]

77. Gilbert Fulton, the author of *Most Holy Principle* explains: "That the eight hour meeting described by Lorin C. Woolley is not found in the diaries on that date offers little support for disclaimers. It is more to be expected than not, considering the conditions at the time and the confiscation of many records and properties. Caution and secrecy were as imperative upon them as upon Joseph and his brethren years earlier" (4:44).

78. See, for example, Abraham H. Cannon Journal, 29 March 1892, Church History Library.

The absence of historical references to any of the five copies of the 1886 revelation during the subsequent three decades is puzzling. Perhaps all five men immediately sequestered their manuscripts beyond the sight of anyone who would have documented their viewing, but such behavior seems less probable. If they were shared, apparently none were circulated far enough to have generated a pre-1920s written reference of their existence. Even today, their whereabouts are unknown.

Five men ordained with authority to independently continue plural marriage

Undoubtedly the most important new detail introduced by Lorin Woolley in his 1920s expansion of the 1912 statement involves the ordination of five men to authority which allowed them to seal plural marriage independent of the church leaders' decisions. These are the same five men who received the copies of the 1886 revelation. According to Woolley's account, the "Prophet Joseph Smith stood by directing the proceedings. Two of us had not met the Prophet Joseph Smith in his mortal lifetime, and we—Charles H. Wilkins and myself—were introduced to him and shook hands with him." Why others of the thirteen missed this opportunity to see the resurrected prophet is not explained, but it undoubtedly would have made an unforgettable impression upon those five men.

Two of the five, Samuel Bateman and Charles Wilcken, were bodyguards to John Taylor. They were devout and dependable. However, it is unclear why Taylor would have ignored members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles—men who had already been valiant in defending and practicing plural marriage—and, instead, elevated two bodyguards to a lofty priesthood calling on that occasion.[79]

79. Douglas M. Todd Sr. recorded on September 1, 1934: "After reading some expressions in a letter ascribed to A. W. Ivins in which the foregoing revelation (1886) is referred to as an unsigned scrap of paper—a so-called revelation—the words of a man which were never submitted to the people of the Church and are not binding, etc., I went up and talked with my sister Nellie E. Taylor, plural wife of John W. Taylor to learn what she knew about it. She says John W. referred to the circumstances on several occasions and told how his father was in hiding at the home of John Woolley at Centerville the night it was received. That Lorin Woolley was on guard in the next room and witnessed a strange light under Pres. Taylor's door. Next day a message was sent to those of the Apostles then at home to meet Pres. T[aylor]. at Centerville. Bro.

Samuel Bateman was a powerfully built man who had led the first platoon under captain Lot Smith in the guerrilla action against the invading US Army in 1857. He also worked as an assistant to famed Orrin Porter Rockwell. Israel Bennion referred to Rockwell and Samuel Bateman as "keepers of the peace who filled the gap between no control and the control of law and order which slowly developed" in the Utah territory.[80] Later, he served as a member of the Salt Lake City police force and, also, was known to accompany Brigham Young on his tours throughout the territory.[81] Samuel, who was also a polygamist,[82] was chosen by John Taylor to serve as his personal bodyguard when the two of them entered the underground early in 1885.[83] After President Taylor's death, Samuel became a guard and driver for Woodruff and his counselors. However, by late 1888, he tired of life on the underground and turned himself in to the sheriff. He was fined seventy-five dollars and given a prison term.[84]

While Samuel Bateman "insisted on his children marrying within the church,"[85] no evidence has been found indicating that he ever performed a marriage ceremony. His daughter wrote a book describing many events

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Geo. Gibbs arranged for a sheep wagon well closed in and drove them up. John W. was asked to stand guard in the adjoining room. He said the revelation was submitted and received. The original was brought to the Temple, but as there was danger of the Temple being raided, it and other records were hidden by Wm. Salmon. This copy was later given to John W. who asked his brother-in-law, Rodney Badger, to place it in a safety box at the bank where he worked. It was later returned to John W. Taylor, who kept it in his office." Douglas M. Todd, *Journal of Douglas M. Todd, Sr.* (n.p.: [Pioneer Press], n.d.), 10–11, italics added. This retelling from Nellie Taylor to Douglas Todd includes several undocumentable claims. It alleges that John W. Taylor was "standing guard in an adjoining room," but none of the contemporaneous accounts place John W. there that day. That the apostle might have been present but was relegated to "stand guard" when genuine bodyguards like Samuel Bateman and Charles Wilcken were allowed to attend seems less likely. The narrative also outlines a provenance for the revelation manuscript that contradicts John W. Taylor's declaration that his first knowledge of it came as he "found it on his father's [President John Taylor] desk immediately after his death." Collier and Knutson, *Trials of John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley*, 10.

80. Israel Bennion Papers, Church History Library.

81. Gustive O. Larson, *The "Americanization" of Utah for Statehood* (San Marino, CA: Huntington Library, 1971), 155–56.

82. Samuel Bateman married Marinda Allen and, together, they had thirteen children— Daniel R. Bateman being the oldest and Juliaetta, the youngest. Samuel also wed Harriet Egbert, who bore him eight children. Juliaetta Bateman Jensen, *Little Gold Pieces: The Story of My Mormon Mother's Life* (Salt Lake City: Stanway Printing, 1948), 233.

83. Ibid., 113.

84. Ibid., 78, 127.

85. Ibid., 139.

from his life, but nothing is mentioned which would support the idea that he had received an exceptional priesthood responsibility in 1886.[86] Regarding the 1890 Manifesto, she wrote that her father's "intelligence told him that time and circumstances may change, even that which he believed had been revealed by God."[87] Bateman attended the October conference when the 1890 Manifesto was presented and recalled that "some power not my own" raised his arm. "I voted to sustain President Woodruff in this matter. As soon as I had done it a sense of peace and contentment came over me."[88] Available documents demonstrate that he supported the 1890 Manifesto, and that he fathered no more children afterwards.[89]

As mentioned above, Samuel Bateman's son Daniel, corroborated Lorin Woolley's claims regarding the eight-hour meeting, but he also admitted: "I was not present when the five spoken of by Brother Woolley were set apart for special work."[90] Despite his close proximity to his father on that day and their continued closeness during the remainder of Samuel's life, [91] Daniel reported that his father never taught him about the need to continue plural marriage after the 1890 Manifesto nor said anything about an 1886 ordination giving him authority to seal plural marriages.[92] If the elder Bateman held special priesthood power, by his son's own admission, he was very successful in hiding it from his

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid., 130.

88. Ibid.

89. Bateman family genealogical records show that his last child was Cora May Bateman born February 23, 1891. See the Family Search website at www.familysearch.org.

90. "1929 Standard Account"; Joseph W. Musser, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (Salt Lake City: n.p., 1934), 62.

91. Samuel Bateman Journal, Church History Library. Samuel recorded meetings with his son on the following dates during the first year after the proposed September 27, 1886, ordinations: For the remainder of 1886—30 September; 8, 11, 12, 16, 17, 25 October; 3, 11, 13, 22, 24, 27, 29 November; and 5, 6, 8, 13, 15, 16, 17, 22, 23, 25 December. For 1887—1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 12, 14, 18, 20, 29, 30 January; 4, 7, 10, 18, 19, 20, 26 February; 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 12, 13, 21, 24, 27, 28, 29 March; 2, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11, 13, 19, 23, 25, 30 April; 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 14, 16, 20, 21, 31 May; 2, 11, 12, 14, 16, 17, 28 June; 4, 5, 10, 25, 26, 27, 28 July; 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 15, 16, 18, 20 August; and 6, 8, 14, 16, 18, 19, 20, 23, 26 September. Letters were sent to or received from Daniel Bateman on the following dates (1886)– 28 September; 1, 10, 22, 23, 25 October; 10 November. For 1887–22, 25 January; 1, 7, 18, 23 February; 16 April; 2, 4, 25 May; 7, 8, 30 June; 2, 13, 15, 22, 28, 31 July; and 1 August.

92. Musser Journals, 21 December 1936.

own family.[93] Daniel reported that he learned of his father's priesthood ordination from a friend who told him about it years after his father's death.[94] Hiding his authority from his closest family members suggests that Samuel did little to exercise that priesthood responsibility or to fulfill the two covenants he reportedly contracted with John Taylor that day.

The second bodyguard, Charles H. Wilcken (sometimes Wilkins) was a large man, a veteran of the German army who had been decorated with the Iron Cross for bravery on the battlefield. He came to Utah with General Johnston's invading army in 1857 and was converted to Mormonism. After serving a mission for the church from 1871–73, Wilcken attached himself to Brigham Young as his devoted protector. Following Young's death in 1877, his allegiance shifted to President John Taylor, and later to George Q. Cannon[95] and Wilford Woodruff.[96]

During his life, Charles Wilcken experienced two failed marriages and several frustrations as an unsuccessful real estate speculator. Nevertheless, he remained devoted to the church, being ordained a patriarch by president Joseph F. Smith on April 13, 1911, and serving the last few years of his life as a guide on Temple Square, dying in 1914.[97] Nothing has been identified to suggest he performed plural marriages or had received the commission and authority Woolley claimed for him after Woolley's death.

The third recipient of the special ordination was George Q. Cannon, who was ordained an apostle in 1860. Concerning the apostleship, Brigham Young taught: "The High Priesthood, and the Lesser Priesthood, and all the Priesthood there is are combined, centered in, composed

93. See Brian C. Hales and J. Max Anderson, *The Priesthood of Modern Polygamy: An LDS Perspective* (Salt Lake City: NPI, 1992), 69–70.

94. Musser Journals, 21 December 1936.

95. Larson, *Americanization of Utah*, 155–56. Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, *Under the Prophet in Utah: The National Menace of a Political Priestcraft* (Boston: C. M. Clark, 1911), 24. One day in 1888, Wilcken was visiting president George Q. Cannon in prison. Cannon's son recalled: "When a guard entered with his hat on. Wilcken snatched it from his head. 'Never enter his presence,' he said, 'without taking it off.' And the guard never did again'" (Ibid., 81).

96. Thomas G. Alexander, "The Odyssey of a Latter-day Prophet: Wilford Woodruff and the Manifesto of 1890," *Journal of Mormon History* 17 (1991): 202.

97. William C. Seifrit, "Charles Henry Wilcken, an Undervalued Saint," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 55, no. 4 (Fall 1987): 321. See Amy Wilcken Pratt Romney, "Stories from the Life of Charles Henry Wilcken, Utah State Historical Society Collection, 1974." Also, "Eighteen Hundred Fifty Seven," *Young Woman's Journal*, nos. 9 and 11 (1907): 393–97, 495–96; Wilford Woodruff Journals, 6 December 1893, Church History Library.

of, and circumscribed by the apostleship."[98] Having already received the apostleship twenty-six years earlier, it is unclear what additional power might have been conveyed through the ordination described by Woolley.

Lorin Woolley reported that the fourth person ordained was his father, John W. Woolley, who was the only one of the five men, besides Lorin, still alive during the 1920s, when Lorin first taught of the 1886 ordinations. John was in his nineties at the time and was quite hard of hearing.[99] He apparently left no testimonial regarding an 1886 ordination or a written body of instructions or other teachings. His granddaughter, Olive Woolley Coombs, recalled that she never heard her grandfather speak of the ordinations or other things her father Lorin later declared.[100]

John indeed performed plural marriages without permission from the president of the church, Joseph F. Smith, after the 1904 Manifesto.[101] His actions were investigated by the Quorum of the Twelve in 1914. When questioned by the apostles regarding the authority he used to solemnize the plural matrimonies, he did not disclose an 1886 ordination by John Taylor or produce his copy of the 1886 revelation in his defense. Instead, John Woolley stated he assumed he was authorized due to a conversation he had with Matthias Cowley, even though Cowley had been dropped from the Quorum of the Twelve at the time and later denied giving Woolley authority.[102] Woolley was excommunicated and left no testimony of the 1886 meeting or ordinations in any other venue. Price Johnson, who knew John, recalled: "John W. Woolley would not preside

98. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses*, 1:134. In 1879, George Q. Cannon taught: "My view is that the apostleship, now held in this Church, embodies all the authority bestowed by the Lord upon man in the flesh." *Journal of Discourses* 21:269. John Taylor said: "This is embraced in the Apostleship, which has been given by the Almighty, and which embraces all the keys, powers and authorities ever conferred upon man." *Journal of Discourses*, 19:124.

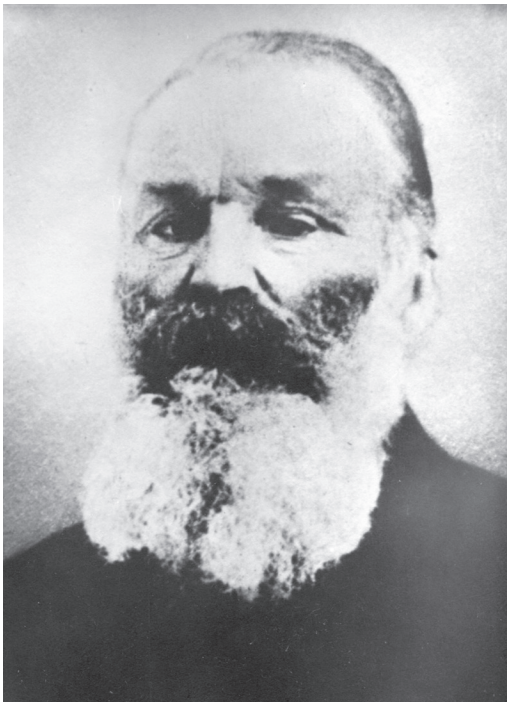
99. On November 10, 1921, Baldwin wrote: "Brother Clark and I went to Centerville in the evening to visit Brother Woolley. Tried to fit the father, John Woolley, with an instrument to help his hearing." Nathaniel Baldwin Journals, Church History Library.

100. Olive Woolley Coombs in Baird and Baird, *Reminiscences* (1st ed.), 1:5; also quoted in Briney, *Silencing Mormon Polygamy*, 203n53.

101. Usually he would perform the marriages in his home, but he was known to seal in other locations including "on the sidewalk." See Bishop, *1886 Visitations of Jesus Christ*, 141; Baird and Baird, *Reminiscences*, 2nd ed. [n.d. ca. 1998], 2:53.

102. Affidavit is found in the Anthony W. Ivins Papers, Utah State Historical Society.

in any meeting outside of his own home."[103] If he believed the things his son Lorin was teaching in the 1920s, the elder Woolley apparently left no record of it.[104]



John W. Woolley.

103. Baird and Baird, *Reminiscences* (2nd ed.), 2:65. Concerning his teachings, Fred Collier writes that "notes on his [John W. Woolley] speeches were also taken at the time and have been preserved." Fred Collier, "Re-Examining the Lorin Woolley Story," *Doctrine of the Priesthood* 1, no. 2 (1981): 4. Other than this brief reference, the author has found no other evidence for the existence of "notes" from John W. Woolley's teachings either in or out of Mormon fundamentalism.

104. Two individuals referred to experiences wherein John W. Woolley reportedly mentioned an 1886 "eight-hour meeting": Johnson, *The L. S. Johnson Sermons*, 1:341, 3:800, and Morris Kunz, *Reminiscences on Priesthood* [privately printed], 8. However, neither man quotes John Woolley as testifying that during that described meeting he was "ordained" with sealing authority. In a 1971 interview, Price Johnson stated that in 1924, "after Brother [John] Woolley got through telling me his experiences, he bore witness to me that the Lord had prepared men to keep that principle alive when the Church would reject it." Baird and Baird, *Reminiscences* (2nd ed.), 2:54.

During the years following his excommunication, John Woolley desired to be reinstated.[105] In 1918, he asked George E. Woolley,[106] his half-brother, to assist as an intermediary with the LDS general authorities.[107] John related how "he felt very keenly being on the outside of the Church" and confessed that "he had suffered very much in his feelings" as a consequence of his excommunication.[108] In another letter, George wrote: "[John] had been to me and asked me to use my influence in getting him back into the church but I cannot consistently do anything for him as long as he takes the attitude he does. I told him when he came to me that he ought to go direct to Pres. Grant himself and put himself in their hands to do just as they might direct.... What I wanted was to have him conduct himself in a way to secure reinstatement."[109]

Shortly after John Woolley appealed to George for help, he was asked to dedicate the grave of his deceased sister-in-law. This request put

105. John W. Woolley's granddaughter, Olive Woolley Coombs, remembered in 1971 that sometime between 1914 and 1918 they met president Joseph F. Smith at a stake conference: "President Smith put his arm around Grandfather's arm and said, 'John, I'm very sorry about what has been done. I want you to know it wasn't my will. It was voted. But I have the assurance that if you will come back into the Church secretly we are ready and willing.' And he (Grandfather) said, 'I appreciate that very much, but since I was taken out publicly, the way you must take me back is publicly, because I feel I have done no wrong.'" Baird and Baird, *Reminiscences* (1st ed.), 1:14. This recollection, popular among Mormon fundamentalists, seems to contradict the correspondence written by John's half-brothers in the years shortly after the excommunication. What is also unclear is how John Woolley was "taken out publicly" or could be taken back publicly.

106. John Wickersham Woolley was the eighth child of Edwin Dilworth Woolley and Mary Wickersham Woolley. George Edwin Woolley and Orson Olpin Woolley were third and fourth children of Edwin Dilworth Woolley and Mary Ann Olpin.

107. George E. Woolley to Alvira Woolley, 26 July 1918, Church History Library.

108. George E. Woolley to Orson A. Woolley, 27 July 1918, Church History Library.

109. George E. Woolley to Orson A. Woolley, 11 December 1918, Church History Library. Some fundamentalists assert that during this period, John Woolley held the priesthood office of high priest apostle, which is higher than that of the church president. Price Johnson remembered in 1971: "John W. Woolley and Lorin Woolley were called in on several, yes, on many occasions for consultations with President Joseph F. Smith in regard to the policy of the Church. When any great questions came up he called them in to consult with them and get their advice, acknowledging them in their positions as the heads of the Priesthood." Baird and Baird, *Reminiscences* (2nd ed.), 2:55. On February 9, 1933, Lorin C. Woolley taught: "James E. Talmage tried to get John W. Woolley to seal a plural wife to him in March 1900, but was refused." Musser's Book of Remembrance (original p. 55), in Briney, *Musser's Book of Remembrance*, 108–9. Two weeks after the death of Talmage, Lorin explained: "As James E. Talmage approached the gates of heaven, he was accosted by John Taylor and John W. Woolley, et al., and felt to be embraced by them, but was told 'your place is way down there, how far we don't know, only Christ knows.'" Musser's Book of Remembrance (original p. 65), in Briney, *Musser's Book of Remembrance*, 128–29.

him in a delicate position as he did not want to further agitate church leaders by claiming to use priesthood authority after his excommunication. Yet, he also wanted to fulfill the petition to dedicate the grave. George believed "if it became known that he [John] was doing these things after being cut off, that it would be construed as defiance of their act by the Twelve and he would be just that [much] more likely not to be reinstated than if he would lay low."[110] George wrote that as they were riding to the grave site: "I asked John if he intended to dedicate the grave. He said he did not want to but they had asked him and he didn't know what he would do. I told him in my judgment, it would be a mistake and gave him my reason." George then reported how John chose to deal with the sensitive situation: "Well, John dedicated (?) the grave. [But] did not do it by virtue of any priesthood."[111] On that occasion, John Woolley did not assert any priesthood authority, giving only a prayer and apparently no one complained. Despite this concession and attempts by his brothers to help him comply with the requirements for rebaptism, he died a nonmember.

For most of his life, John W. Woolley was a monogamist. He experienced plural marriage with two wives for six years between 1886 and 1892. John was sealed to Julia Searles Ensign on March 20, 1851, with whom he had six children. On October 4, 1886, just one week after the reported September 27th activities, John wed Ann Everington Roberts for time only. This polygamous union might have been prompted by the covenants Lorin declared his father had made a few days earlier. However, a more likely explanation is that the couple had been planning their nuptials for weeks or months, and the timing is coincidental.

As a result of the matrimony, John lived the principle of plural marriage until 1892 when his first wife died. Roberts bore Woolley no offspring, passing away on January 11, 1910. Two months later, on March 23, John married thirty-nine-year-old Annie Fisher for time. In all, John W. Woolley was sealed to only one woman and had no children in plural marriage.

110. George E. Woolley to Alvira Woolley, 26 July 1918, italics added.

111. Ibid. The "?" is present in the original text possibly because George believed that without the priesthood, John's prayer did not constitute a genuine grave dedication.

Lorin Woolley identified himself as the fifth man ordained that day. As such, he stands as the only witness of these important ordinances. He reported four others were set apart and that the meeting beforehand was attended by thirteen people. Yet, none of those twelve individuals corroborated Woolley's claim to the described priesthood conferrals. The lack of additional witnesses is doctrinally problematic because scriptural guidelines state that "in the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established" (D&C 6:28, 2 Cor. 13:1). The historical record shows that during Joseph Smith's day when important priesthood ordinations occurred, at least two witnesses were present. For the bestowal of the Aaronic priesthood (D&C 13:1), the Melchizedek priesthood (D&C 27:12), and important keys of the priesthood (D&C 110:11–13), both Joseph and Oliver Cowdery were there bearing witness.

In addition, "the question of how much authority was extended in the setting apart of five men" continues to be debated among fundamentalists themselves.[112] Did they preside over the LDS church president or did they simply have authority to seal plural marriages independent of his authority? Apparently, Lorin Woolley did not clarify the issue during his lifetime of teaching and rehearsing.[113] Drew Briney concludes: "There are, also, no firsthand accounts from John Woolley or Lorin Woolley clearly explaining their claims to priesthood authority."[114]

On January 5, 1883, Lorin Woolley married Sarah Ann Roberts in the Endowment House in Salt Lake City.[115] Together they had nine children. Available evidences support that Lorin lived most of his life as a monogamist, not marrying plurally until 1932, just two years before his death. Then, at age seventy-five, Lorin wedded Goulda Kmetzsch

112. Briney, *Silencing Mormon Polygamy*, 168.

113. See Musser Journals, 13 August 1822.

114. Briney, *Silencing Mormon Polygamy*, 169. Briney further contends: "There is more evidence available to historically prove the existence of the 8-hour meeting than there is to substantiate Joseph's claim of the first vision." Ibid., xii n17. The problem with this comparison is that Lorin reported thirteen attendees, but only Woolley and Bateman, after waiting thirty-five years, actually mentioned it. That calculates out to 15 percent of the possible witnesses who left a record, with 85 percent who remained completely silent. In contrast, Joseph Smith was the only person present with deity in the First Vision, which he documented several times during his lifetime. As noted in "Primary Accounts of Joseph Smith's First Vision of Deity," the Joseph Smith Papers website, accessed May 3, 2014, http://josephsmithpapers.org/site/accounts-of-the-first-vision.

115. Preston Woolley Parkinson, *The Utah Woolley Family* (Salt Lake City: Deseret New Press, 1967), 313.

(b.1904).[116] He fathered no children in plural marriage. One fundamentalist writer, Lynn Bishop, posits plural wives for Lorin prior to 1915; however, he provides no documentation.[117] Bishop's speculations are cited in the Wikipedia entry for "Lorin C. Woolley": "Woolley is thought to have married at least five plural wives, four of whom were his first cousins: Alice May, Sarah Viola, Lucy, and Elnora Woolley by 1915."[118]

If Lorin Woolley had married additional wives prior to 1932, it is probable those women would have eagerly sought to accompany him to meetings where similarly minded dissidents would congregate. Lorin might have proudly displayed his plurality in front of his followers. For example, polygamist Joseph W. Musser recorded for May 22, 1927: "Attended special meeting with friends at house of Bro. Heber C. Kimball. Had most excellent time. Accompanied by wives Mary and Ellis."[119] None of the available records describe even Sarah Ann Woolley attending with Lorin or supporting his polygamy claims.[120]

116. Barbara Owen Kelsch, *Louis Alma Kelsch* (privately printed), 27. Lorin's apparent monogamy has been disputed, although no evidence for any pre-1932 plural marriages has been presented. See Baird and Baird, *Reminiscences* (1st ed.), 1:5; Bishop, *1886 Visitations of Jesus Christ*, 192–202.

117. Lynn Bishop's primary claims can be found in *1886 Visitations of Jesus Christ*, 239. Bishop also asserts Lorin married a Lamanite woman who lived in the Yucatan Peninsula of Mexico, although there is no evidence Woolley ever visited there. Ibid., 194–95.

118. "Lorin C. Woolley," entry in *Wikipedia*, accessed December 12, 2013, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lorin_C._Woolley.

119. Musser Journals, 22 May 1927.

120. For example, Musser recorded that on September 13, 1922, Woolley attended a meeting apparently without any spouse accompanying him: "Attended meeting at Israel Barlow's at Bountiful, in afternoon, lasting from about 4:30 to 10. P.M. A most enjoyable time and spiritual treat.... Brother Loren C. Woolley came home with [Musser's wife] Ellis and self and spent the night, a most welcome guest in our home." Musser Journals, 13 September 1922.

Anna Kmetzsch with her three sons-in-law and niece's new husband. Left: Louis A. Kelsch, Joseph W. Musser, J. Leslie Broadbent, and Lorin C. Woolley

Fundamentalist leaders would later write that the five men were actually set apart to a presiding priesthood super quorum called the Council of Friends. Historian D. Michael Quinn admitted: "I find no historical contemporary evidence to support that ordination of the Council of Friends [the five men] in 1886.... As a historian, I have no evidence that there was a setting apart or an ordination of a Council of Friends in 1886.... I would be more than happy to find verification, and if I did find it, I certainly wouldn't conceal evidence of the ordination of men in 1886 as a Council of Friends to continue plural marriage.... I find no evidence of that event prior to Lorin Woolley's detailed statements on various occasions in the 1920s concerning the 1886 ordination."[121]

121. D. Michael Quinn, August 1991 meeting with the Allred Group, Bluffdale, UT, copy of transcript in possession of the author.

Thirteen attendees covenanted to support and perpetuate plural marriage

According to the 1929 account, all thirteen in attendance at the eight-hour meeting were put "under covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or Plural Marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle." Later, Woolley stated that, regarding him and the other four men who were ordained, John Taylor "set us apart and place[d] us under covenant that while we lived we would see to it that no year passed by without children being born in the principle of plural marriage." Under the described circumstances of the eight-hour meeting, it seems likely that the covenant-makers would have sought to fulfill the requirements.

Investigating those thirteen named individuals shows that after September 27, 1886, John Taylor remained steeled against the prospects of giving up the practice of plural marriage and even married a new plural wife on December 19th.[122] However, the documented behavior of the thirteen individuals who attended the eight-hour meeting in 1886 does not seem to support that they sought to keep the two covenants Lorin Woolley described. Especially surprising are the actions of the five men. In addition, Amy Woolley, Lorin's sister, began her own journal just weeks later, but her entries do not reflect a compulsion to sustain plural marriage.[123] In fact, when Lorin Woolley began fighting church leaders in the 1920s regarding polygamy, Amy distanced herself from her brother, staying with the LDS church.

122. John Taylor wed Josephine Elizabeth Roueche on December 19, 1886. Samuel W. Taylor, The Last Pioneer: John Taylor a Mormon Prophet (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1976), 374.

123. See Amy Woolley diaries, 1886–1992, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT.

Thirteen individuals listed as attending an eight hour meeting on 27 September 1886	**Death**	**September 1886–September 1890**		**September 1890–April 1904**		**After April 1904**		**Left record of a September 27, 1886 8-hour meeting?**
		New Plural Wives	**Children in plural marriage**	**New Plural Wives**	**Children in plural marriage**	**New Plural Wives**	**Children in plural marriage**	
John Taylor	1887	1	0	n/a		n/a		No
George Q. Cannon	**1901**	**0**	**3**	**0**	**1**	**n/a**		**No**
John W. Woolley	**1928**	**1**[124]	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**No**
Lorin Woolley	**1934**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**1**	**0**	**1912**[125]**–1920s**
Samuel Bateman	**1911**	**0**	**2**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**No**
Charles H. Wilkins	**1914**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**0**	**No**
L. John Nuttall	1905	0	1	0	0	0	0	No
H. Charles Bearrell	1908	0	0	1[126]	1	0	0	No
Daniel R. Bateman	1942	0	0	0	0	0	0	1929
Samuel Sedden	1924	0	0	0	0	0	0	No
George Earl[127]	1956	0	0	0	0	0	0	No
Julia E. Woolley	1892	0	0	n/a				No
Amy Woolley	1921	0[128]	0	0	0	0	0	No

The chart tabulates the men's involvement with new plural wives and plural children after the 1890 Manifesto.[129]

124. On October 4, 1886, John W. Woolley wed Ann Everington Roberts for time only. Since this sealing occurred only one week after the reported meeting and was only for time, the event was probably planned weeks or months earlier.

125. Lorin Woolley's 1912 account does not refer to an eight-hour meeting, but does mention "a meeting that afternoon [September 27th], at which a number there were present and myself." Lorin Woolley, "Statement of Facts," 1912, Church History Library.

126. In 1892, Charles Bearrell, of the Salt Lake Stake, entered into a plural marriage—not by approaching any of the five men reportedly ordained in 1886, but through mutual covenants with a woman by whom he fathered a child. The high council excommunicated him "for desecrating one of the most sacred ordinances or rites of the Holy Priesthood, and for adultery." Salt Lake

The Existence of the 1886 Revelation Became More Important than its Contents

In the 1920s, as Lorin Woolley began sharing his recollections of an 1886 revelation, an eight-hour meeting, and ordinations to lofty priesthood offices, LDS church leaders took note. At that time, the only documentable detail within his claims was the existence of the 1886 revelation. However, rather than assert that Woolley had wrapped a fictional historical narrative around a genuine document, the primary focus of church authorities was to deny the revelation's existence. That decision guaranteed that the one assertion in Woolley's story that could not be successfully disputed would become the battleground between the church and the fundamentalists.

On June 17, 1933, the First Presidency issued a statement saying: "It is alleged that on September 26–27, 1886, President John Taylor received a revelation from the Lord, the purported text of which is given in publications circulated apparently by or at the instance of this same organization [Mormon fundamentalists]. As to this *pretended revelation* it should be said that the archives of the Church contain no such revelation; the archives contain no record of any such revelation, nor any evidence justifying a belief that any such revelation was ever given."[130] Another church leader referred to it as a "scrap of paper."[131]

Stake High Council Minutes, March 22, 1893, June 8, 1898; Joseph H. Dean Diary, 16 June 1895, Church History Library.

127. Born in 1871, George Earl did not marry until 1892 and was never a polygamist.

128. Amy Woolley remained the monogamous wife of her husband, Thomas Cherry, after their 1893 wedding.

129. Data from B. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamous Passage* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), appendix, and genealogical information available at www.familysearch.org

130. James R. Clark, ed., *Messages of the First Presidency* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1935–51), 5:327, italics added.

131. Musser, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage*, 25.

Understandably, the budding Mormon fundamentalists rallied to expose the perceived church-sponsored cover-up. With confident gusto, polygamist leaders broadcast the reality of the 1886 revelation to any and all listeners and readers. The manuscript was highlighted in private meetings and later published in *Truth* magazine and as part of a separate tract, *Four Hidden Revelations*.[132]

The existence of the 1886 revelation manuscript quickly became as important as anything contained within it. Unsurprisingly, polygamists reasoned that if LDS leaders sought to conceal its reality, then their efforts to discredit other parts of Woolley's account, like the eight-hour meeting or priesthood existing outside of the church, were probably not trustworthy either. By proving the presence of the revelation manuscript, fundamentalist leaders concomitantly elevated the believability of Lorin Woolley's other declarations. Unfortunately, no fundamentalist publications to date have examined the contradictory evidences, perhaps, in part, because of high confidence that since the revelation is real, so, too, are the associated details.

Conclusion

The 1886 revelation provides multiple layers of validation for Mormon fundamentalists. Many are certain that, somewhere within its stern language, the practice of plural marriage continues to be commanded. The revelation also serves to corroborate the whole of Lorin Woolley's 1929 account, with its reported nighttime visitation of Jesus Christ to John Taylor, a subsequent eight-hour meeting, and the described make-or-break ordinations foreshadowing the eventual departure of priesthood authority from the mother church. Ostensibly, that authority is exercised by fundamentalists today to perform their plural marriages.

The question arises as to how history might have unfolded if LDS church leaders in the early decades of the twentieth century had simply admitted the existence of the revelation and classified it with other documents of similar origins.[133] As D. Michael Quinn observed, it "really

132. Musser, *Four Hidden Revelations*.
133. See Collier, *Unpublished Revelations*.

added nothing to any of the revelations that had been given on plural marriage."[134] Would fundamentalist investigators, thereafter, have been more highly motivated to scrutinize Lorin Woolley's other teachings, as recorded by Joseph W. Musser in his Book of Remembrance[135] or to closely examine the details he provided regarding the September 1886 occurrences? If so, what conclusions might they have drawn and would those conclusions have affected the paths of leaders like Rulon Allred and Rulon Jeffs (Warren's father)? Unfortunately, there is no way to tell.

134. Quinn, "Plural Marriages After the 1890 Manifesto."
135. See Briney, *Musser's Book of Remembrance*.

Appendix
1929 Standard Account

While the brethren were at the Carlisle residency [in Murray, Utah] in May or June of 1886, letters began to come to President John Taylor from such men as John Sharp, Horace Eldredge, William Jennings, John T. Caine, Abraham Hatch, President Cluff and many other leading men from all over the Church, asking the leaders to do something, as the Gentiles were talking of confiscating their property in connection with the property of the Church.

These letters not only came from those who were living in the Plural Marriage relation, but also from prominent men who were presiding in various offices of the Church who were not living in that relation. They all urged that something be done to satisfy the Gentiles so that their property would not be confiscated.

George Q. Cannon on his own initiative selected a committee comprising himself, Hyrum B. Clawson, Franklin S. Richards, John T. Caine, and James Jack to get up a statement or Manifesto that would meet the objections urged by the brethren above named. They met from time to time to discuss the situation. From the White home, where President Taylor and companions stopped, after leaving the Carlisle home, they came out to father's. George Q. Cannon would go and consult with the brethren of the committee, I taking him back and forth each day.

On September 26, 1886, George Q. Cannon, Hyrum B. Clawson, Franklin S. Richards, and others, met with President John Taylor at my father's residence at Centerville, Davis County, Utah, and presented a document for President Taylor's consideration.

I had just got back from a three days trip, during most of which I had retired to rest.

Between one and two o'clock p.m., Brother Bateman came and woke me up and asked me to be at my father's home where a Manifesto was to be discussed. I went there and found there were congregated Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, L. John Nuttall, Charles Birrell, George Q. Cannon, Franklin S. Richards and Hyrum B. Clawson.

We discussed the proposed Manifesto at length, but we were unable to become united in the discussion. Finally George Q. Cannon suggested that President Taylor take the matter up with the Lord and decide the same the next day.

Brothers Clawson and Richards were taken back to Salt Lake. That evening I was called to act as

guard during the first part of the night, notwithstanding the fact that I was greatly fatigued on account of the three days' trip I had just completed.

The brethren retired to bed soon after nine o'clock. The sleeping rooms were inspected by the guard as was the custom. President Taylor's room had no outside door. The windows were heavily screened.

Sometime after the brethren retired and while I was reading the Doctrine and Covenants, I was suddenly attracted to a light appearing under the door leading to President Taylor's room, and was at once startled to hear the voices of men talking there. There were three distinct voices. I was bewildered because it was my duty to keep people out of the room and evidently someone had entered without my knowing it. I made a hasty examining and found all the window screens intact. While examining the last window, and feeling greatly agitated, a voice spoke to me, saying, "Can't you feel the Spirit? Why should you worry?"

At this I returned to my post and continued to hear the voices in the room. They were so audible that although I did not see the parties I could place their positions in the room from the sound of the voices. The three voices continued until about midnight, when one of them left, and the other two continued. One of them I recognized as President John Taylor's voice. I called Charles Birrell and we both sat up until eight o'clock the next morning.

When President Taylor came out of his room about eight o'clock of the morning of September 27, 1886, we could scarcely look at him on account of the brightness of his personage.

He stated, "Brethren, I have had a very pleasant conversation all night with Brother Joseph." (Joseph Smith) I said, "Boss, who is the man that was there until midnight?" He asked, "What do you know about it, Lorin?" I told him all about my experience. He said, "Brother Lorin, that was your Lord."

We had no breakfast, but assembled ourselves in a meeting. I forget who opened the meeting. I was called to offer the benediction. I think my father, John W. Woolley, offered the opening prayer. There were present at this meeting, in addition to President Taylor, George Q. Cannon, L. John Nuttall, John W. Woolley, Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, Charles Birrell, Daniel R. Bateman, Bishop Samuel Sedden, George Earl, my mother, Julia E. Woolley,

my sister, Amy Woolley, and myself. The meeting was held from about nine o'clock in the morning until five in the afternoon without intermission, being about eight hours in all.

President Taylor called the meeting to order. He had the Manifesto, that had been prepared under the direction of George Q. Cannon, read over again. He then put each person under covenant that he or she would defend the principle of Celestial or Plural Marriage, and that they would consecrate their lives, liberty and property to this end, and that they personally would sustain and uphold that principle.

By that time we were all filled with the Holy Ghost. President Taylor and those present occupied about three hours up to this time. After placing us under covenant, he placed his finger on the document, his person rising from the floor about a foot or eighteen inches, and with countenance animated by the Spirit of the Lord, and raising his right hand to the square, he said, "Sign that document, —never! I would suffer my right hand to be severed from my body first. Sanction it, —never! I would suffer my tongue to be torn from its roots in my mouth before I would sanction it!"

After that he talked for about an hour and then sat down and wrote the revelation which was given him by the Lord upon the question of Plural Marriage [the alleged 1886 revelation to John Taylor]. Then he talked to us for some time, and said, "Some of you will be handled and ostracized and cast out from the Church by your brethren because of your faithfulness and integrity to this principle, and some of you may have to surrender your lives because of the same, but woe, woe, unto those who shall bring these troubles upon you." (Three of us were handled and ostracized for supporting and sustaining this principle. There are only three left who were at the meeting mentioned– Daniel R. Bateman, George Earl and myself. So far as I know those of them who have passed away all stood firm to the covenants entered into from that day to the day of their deaths.)

After the meeting referred to, President Taylor had L. John Nuttall write five copies of the revelation. He called five of us together: Samuel Bateman, Charles H. Wilkins, George Q. Cannon, John W. Woolley, and myself.

He then set us apart and placed us under covenant that while we lived we would see to it that

no year passed by without children being born in the principle of plural marriage. We were given authority to ordain others if necessary to carry this work on, they in turn to be given authority to ordain others when necessary, under the direction of the worthy senior (by ordination), so that there should be no cessation in the work. He then gave each of us a copy of the Revelation.

I am the only one of the five now living, and so far as I know all five of the brethren remained true and faithful to the covenants they entered into, and to the responsibilities placed upon them at that time.

During the eight hours we were together, and while President Taylor was talking to us, he frequently arose and stood above the floor, and his countenance and being were so enveloped by light and glory that it was difficult for us to look upon him.

He stated that the document, referring to the Manifesto, was from the lower regions. He stated that many of the things he had told us we would forget and they would be taken from us, but that they would return to us in due time as needed, and from this fact we would know that the same was from the Lord. This has been literally fulfilled. Many of the things I forgot, but they are coming to me gradually, and those things that come to me are as clear as on the day on which they were given.

President Taylor said that the time would come when many of the Saints would apostatize because of this principle. He said "one-half of this people will apostatize over the principle and possibly one-half of the other half" (rising off the floor while making the statement). He also said the day will come when a document similar to that (Manifesto) then under consideration would be adopted by the Church, following which "apostasy and whoredom would be rampant in the Church."

He said that in the time of the seventh president of this Church, the Church would go into bondage both temporally and spiritually and in that day (the day of bondage) the One Mighty and Strong spoken of in the 85th Section of the Doctrine and Covenants would come.

Among many other things stated by President Taylor on this occasion was this: "I would be surprised if ten percent of those who claim to hold the Melchizedek Priesthood will remain true and faithful to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ, at the time of the seventh president, and that there would

be thousands that think they hold the Priesthood at that time, but would not have it properly conferred upon them."

John Taylor set the five mentioned apart and gave them authority to perform marriage ceremonies and also to set others apart to do the same thing as long as they remained on the earth; and while doing so, the Prophet Joseph Smith stood by directing the proceedings. Two of us had not met the Prophet Joseph Smith in his mortal lifetime, and we—Charles H. Wilkins and myself—were introduced to him and shook hands with him.

(Signed) Lorin C. Woolley

TESTIMONY OF DANIEL R. BATEMAN:

I was privileged to be at the meeting of September 27, 1886, spoken of by Brother Woolley, I myself acting as one of the guards for the brethren during those exciting times.

The proceedings of the meeting, as related by Brother Woolley, are correct in every detail. I was not present when the five spoken of by Brother Woolley were set apart for special work, but have on different occasions heard the details of the same related by both Lorin C. Woolley and John W. Woolley, and from all the circumstances with which I am familiar, I firmly believe the testimony of these two brethren to be true.

(Signed) Daniel R. Bateman[136]

136 Musser, *Supplement to the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage* (1934), 56–62.