

Testimony of Benjamin F. Johnson.

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

On the following morning, Sunday April, second, President Smith took me by the arm for a walk, leading the way to a secluded spot within an adjacent grove, where to my great surprise, he commenced to open up to me the principle of plural or celestial marriage, but I was more astonished by his asking me for my sister Almera to be his wife.

I sincerely believed him to be a prophet of God, and I loved him as such, and also for the many evidences of his kindness to me, yet such was the force of my education, and the scorn that

I felt towards anything un-virtuous that under the first impulse of my feelings, I looked him calmly, but firmly in the face and told him that, "I had always believed him to be a good man, and wished to believe it still, and would try to;" and that, "I would take for him a message to my sister, and if the doctrine was true, all would be well, but if I should afterwards learn that it was offered to insult or prostitute my sister I would take his life". With a smile he replied "Benjamin, you will never see that day, but you shall live to know that it is true, and rejoice in it."

He wished me to see my sister and talk to her. I told him, I did not know what I could say to convince her, he replied, "when you open your mouth, you shall be able to comprehend, and you shall not want for evidence nor words". He also told me

that he would preach a sermon that day for me, which I would understand, while the rest of the congregation would not comprehend his meaning. his subject was the ten talents spoken of by the Savior, "unto him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundantly, but from him that hath not (or will not receive) shall be taken away that which he hath, (or might have had.)" plainly giving me to understand that the talents represented wives and children as the principle of enlargement throughout the great future, to those who were heirs of Salvation.

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

of what I was attempting to teach.

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

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

After a short period, President Smith and company, viz. George Miller, William Clayton, J. M. Smith, and Eliza and ^{Angela} Lydia Partridge, (who were the wives of the Prophet) came again to Macedonia (Ramus) where he remained two days, lodging at my house with my sister, as man and wife, (and to my certain knowledge he occupied

the same bed with her.) This visit was on the sixteenth and seventeenth of May, eighteen-hundred and forty-three, returning to Nauvoo on the eighteenth. Again on the nineteenth of October, the same year, President Smith made us another visit at Macedonia, and remained till the twenty-first, he was accompanied by William Clayton, at this time (Oct. 20) he sealed my first wife to me for time and all eternity. He visited us at other times and introduced ladies who accompanied him, as his wives, I think, Lucy Walker was one of them. President Smith also asked me for my sister Esther, but I told him I thought she was engaged to be married to David T. LeBaron, but that he was free to take Mary Ann Hale, an orphan girl whom my mother had raised, and who was then living with me. he said "no, she is not for me, but it is right for you to take her yourself for a wife, and

if your Sister is engaged, it is all right" and in the presence of my family he talked to her on the subject, but as I had suspected, she was promised to be married.

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

Previous to this I had commenced ^{preparations} to build me a brick house, in Macedonia, President Smith proposed, as my sister was now his wife, to furnish means to enlarge the building and we

would own and occupy it jointly, this plan was being carried out at the time of his death.

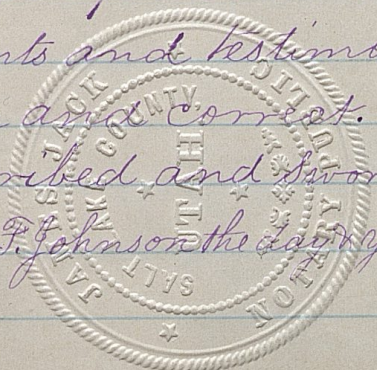
After the death of the Prophet, I told President Brigham Young, what he had said to me relative to my taking Mary Ann Heale to wife, he said it was right, and authorized Father John Smith to seal her to me, which he did on the 14th. of November, A.D. 1844.

B. F. Johnson

Territory of Utah } ss.
County of Salt Lake }

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

Subscribed and sworn to by the } B. F. Johnson
Said B. F. Johnson the day & year above written }



James Jack
Notary Public

10



//

