

# EDITORIAL

## TRUTH

Devoted to Questions—Political, Social  
Economic and Religious

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### EDITORIAL THOUGHT

Life would be a perpetual flea hunt if a man were obliged to run down all the innuendoes, invectives, insinuations, and misrepresentations which are uttered against him.

—Henry Ward Beecher.

### PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR

It is with pleasure and we deem it an honor to devote the major part of this issue of TRUTH to the memory of President John Taylor, whose anniversary occurs November 1st. He was born in the year 1808 in Milnthorpe, a small town in the county of Westmoreland, England. Leaving the place of his birth he settled in Canada with his parents in 1832. He was first taught the Gospel by Parley P. Pratt and received baptism May 9, 1836, referring to which event in late life he said: "I have never doubted any principle of Mormonism since."

When John Taylor came to the leadership of the Church at the death of Brigham Young, August 29, 1877, his administration inherited a baffling situation. He not only faced a national sentiment looking to an extinction of the Church as an organization and the complete spoliation of its members, with polygamy the pretended excuse, but within the Church he was confronted with an increasing faithlessness toward the higher principles of

the Gospel—particularly the "United Order and the order of Plural Marriage"—which principles were earlier proclaimed by Brigham Young as the "fulness of the Gospel." Happily for the work, John Taylor had been prepared by the Lord to handle this distressing situation. He was lacking neither in courage nor wisdom. The former endowment had received a supreme test at Carthage when he voluntarily accompanied the Prophets Joseph and Hyrum Smith to prison, and while there and in his brave attempt to shield his friends from the guns of the mob, he himself was brutally shot, his body receiving five musket balls. The Lord said of him: (1)

I the Lord have raised up unto you my servant John Taylor to preside over you and to be a lawgiver unto my Church. He has mingled his blood with that of the martyred Prophets. Nevertheless, while I have taken my servants Joseph and Hyrum unto myself, I have preserved my servant John Taylor for a wise purpose in me.—Revelation through Wilford Woodruff 1880; Supplement to New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage, p 49.

One of the major features of this "wise purpose in me" was doubtless to perfect the organization previously given form by the Prophet Joseph Smith, whereby the sealing priesthood of Elijah might continue to function even though the Church rejected God's marriage law. President Taylor was a man who knew no surrender. It was he who proclaimed under very distressing circumstances, "I was not born a slave! I cannot, will not be a slave. I would not be a slave to God! I'd be His servant, friend, His son. I'd go at his behest; but would not be His slave. \* \* \*"

It was this sort of timber that earned for President Taylor the appellation of "the Lion of the Lord," and it was just such timber that the work facing John Taylor required. His wisdom, strength and courage were equal to the occasion. As stated, many of the Saints were beginning to waver in their faith in the principle of Celestial marriage. John

Taylor was not only the President of the Twelve, but was also President of Priesthood and by virtue of the latter calling was the rightful head of the Church; later (October, 1880), he was chosen its President by formal vote. On October 13, 1882 he received a revelation from the Lord in which the importance and absolute necessity of the principle of plural marriage was reaffirmed. It will be recalled that on January 6, 1879, the Supreme Court of the United States rendered its decision in the George Reynolds case, in which the anti-polygamy law of 1862, enacted by Congress against the Saints, was declared constitutional. And that on March 14, 1882, the Edmunds law, placing teeth into the former measure, was enacted. Naturally in the circumstances the Saints wondered to what extent they would be expected to "carry on" in defending the principle of plural marriage since it had been proscribed by the laws of the land. The answer came definite and clear in the revelation mentioned. We copy:

Thus saith the Lord to the Twelve, and to the priesthood and people of my Church: Let my servants George Teasdale and Heber J. Grant be appointed to fill the vacancies in the Twelve, that you may be fully organized and prepared for the labors devolving upon you, for you have a great work to perform; and then proceed to fill up the presiding quorum of Seventies, and assist in organizing that body of my priesthood who are your co-laborers in the ministry. You may appoint Seymour B. Young to fill up the vacancy in the presiding quorum of Seventies, if he will conform to my law; for it is not meet that men who will not abide my law shall preside over my priesthood.—Life of John Taylor, Roberts, p. 349. (1)

"My law," meant the law of plural marriage. And conforming with this command Elder Young did take a plural wife and qualified for the position. Eternal law cannot become subservient to the law of man. Notwithstanding the Supreme Court of the most powerful civil government on earth had issued its final mandate, outlawing a principle of salvation, the Lord commanded those holders of the Melchisedek priest-

hood in presiding positions to enter into and abide that holy law else they could not qualify to preside over their brethren. It was following this divine mandate that several leading brethren presiding in stakes and wards, and who refused to enter the law, were released from their positions in the Church.

The enemy of righteousness grew more determined to crush the Mormon marriage system. The Edmunds measure was given full constitutional standing by the United States Supreme Court March 23, 1885, after which prosecutions of the Saints became more vigorous. They were hounded day and night, imprisoned and some murdered by officers of the law. President Taylor went into retirement from public view February 1, 1885; and while at the home of John W. Woolley, Centerville, Davis County, Utah, and in response to an inquiry of the Lord as to how binding the law of plural marriage was upon the Saints, on the night of September 26-27 the answer came as follows:

MY SON JOHN, you have asked me concerning the New and Everlasting Covenant and how far it is binding upon my people; thus saith the Lord: All commandments that I give must be obeyed by those calling themselves by 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 and my everlasting covenants cannot be abrogated nor done away with, but they stand forever.

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 and the keeping of my commandments, and yet have I borne with them these many years; and this because of their weakness—because of the perilous times, and 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 and my word and my covenants and my law do not, and as I have heretofore said by my servant Joseph: All those who would enter into my glory must and shall obey my law. And have I not commanded men that if they were Abraham's seed and would enter into my glory, they must do the works of Abraham. I HAVE NOT RE-



VOKED THIS LAW, NOR WILL I, for it is everlasting, and those who will enter into my glory MUST obey the conditions thereof; even so, Amen. (1)

Of this marvelous circumstance Lorin C. Woolley and Daniel R. Bateman, both intimately acquainted with the brethren and acting as their bodyguards during those troublesome times, have given an account over their signatures, in the presence of John Y. Barlow, J. Leslie Broadbent and Joseph W. Musser. We deem it wise to republish this statement at this time for the benefit of our many readers. It is as follows:

Statement of Lorin C. Woolley and Daniel R. Bateman, given at Salt Lake City, Utah, September 22, 1929, pertaining to a revelation of the Lord to President John Taylor, on the subject of Celestial or plural marriage:

Lorin C. Woolley related the following:

While the brethren were at the Carlisle residence 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 day's trip, during most of which time I had been in the saddle, and being greatly fatigued, I had retired to rest.

Between one and two o'clock p. m., Brother Bateman (Samuel 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 that room and evidently someone had entered without my knowing it. I made a hasty examination and found the door leading to the room bolted as usual. I then examined the outside of the house 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

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Furthermore, so far as the authorities of the Church are concerned and so far as the members of the Church are concerned, since this pretended revelation, if ever given, was never presented to and adopted by the Church, or by any council of the Church \* \* \* the said pretended revelation could have no validity and no binding effect and force upon the Church members, and action under it would be unauthorized, illegal and void.—p. 17. (1)

This statement, loosely worded and grossly misleading, was doubtless put forth as a subterfuge to camouflage the facts and lead the masses to believe that no such a revelation was received by John Taylor. However, "murder will out." Some eight months after the issuance of the "Official Statement" (Feb. 10, 1934) A. W. Ivins, one of its signers, in a letter addressed to a member of the Church residing in Long Beach, California, admitted the existence of the text of the revelation in question. He said:

The latter purported revelation of John Taylor (of 1886) has no standing in the Church. I have searched carefully, and all that can be found is a piece of paper found among President Taylor's effects after his death. It was written in pencil and only a few paragraphs which had no signature at all. It was unknown to the Church until members of his own family claimed to have found it among his papers. It was never presented or discussed as a revelation by the presiding authorities of the Church.—Supplement to New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage, p. 15.

This weak admission of the document's existence, cunningly and adroitly written, was evidently intended to minimize its importance, by terming it a "piece of paper found among President Taylor's effects after his death," unsigned and "containing only a few paragraphs." The feeble effort at repudiation will not escape the detection of those seeking truth; a school-boy mind can grasp it. It was on a "piece of paper" and contained "but few paragraphs," and was "without signature," therefore it could not be genuine, but it **was found among the effects of President Taylor!** Will the reader refer to a number of the revela-

tions given through the Prophet Joseph Smith and recorded in the Doctrine and Covenants, the law book to the Church, such for instance as Sections 22, 26, 32, 37, 43, and 116, the latter containing only one paragraph and thirty words. One may readily and correctly surmise that each of these revelations were written on a "piece of paper" and contained "but few paragraphs," and, of course, not one of them bears the signature of the Prophet! They all, including the 1882 and 1886 revelations to John Taylor, were messages from Jesus Christ and bore the unmistakable ear marks of HIS signature.

Elder Ivins, it must be remembered, was a member of the First Presidency and one of the signers of the "Official Statement" referred to and in which the existence of the document was denied, though he now, eight months later admits its existence, but makes no correction of the error.

On a later occasion (December 31, 1934), some eighteen months after the "Official Statement" referred to, and with greater frankness, Elder Melvin J. Ballard, a member of the Quorum of Twelve, admitted the existence of the record of this revelation. In a letter to Elder Esie D. Jenson of Millville, Utah, he stated:

The pretended revelation of President John Taylor (of 1886) never had his signature added to it but was written **IN THE FORM OF A REVELATION and UNDOUBTEDLY WAS IN HIS HAND WRITING**; nevertheless it was never submitted to his own associates in the Presidency and the Twelve nor to the Church and consequently does not bind the Church in any sense.—Marriage—Ballard-Jenson Correspondence, p. 27.

Here is an admission of a document in the "form of a revelation" and in the "handwriting" of President Taylor, and is the "purported" revelation which the Church in its "Official Statement" said was non-existent. Elder Ballard claims it was not submitted to "his associates in the Presidency," but one of his associates in the Presidency, George Q. Cannon, was with



President Taylor, in hiding, at the time, had full knowledge of the revelation, and accepted the same. The other associate, Joseph F. Smith, was at the time, in Honolulu, and upon his return home shortly after, the revelation was presented to him by President Taylor, and he accepted it as genuine. There were good reasons for not presenting it to the Church, but it was later presented to and discussed in the councils of the Twelve, and some present members of that quorum cannot, in truth, deny the fact.

What motive these two high Church officials could have in trying to cast doubt on the integrity and veracity of the Prophet John Taylor, imputing to him, at least by implication, an attempt to foist a spurious revelation upon the Saints, our readers must judge for themselves. The Lord said, **"That the inhabitants of Zion shall judge ALL things pertaining to Zion; and liars and hypocrites shall be proved by them, and they who are not apostles and prophets shall be known. (D & C 64:38-39.)"** This judging, it would seem, is now going on.

The Prophet Isaiah predicted the time when—

Judgment also will I lay to the line, and righteousness to the plummet: and the hail shall sweep away the refuge of lies, and the waters shall overflow the hiding place.—Is. 28:17.

Is not this revelation now being fulfilled?

To the statement that because the revelation of 1886 was not presented to the Church for its ratification, the principle involved is not binding upon the Saints, our reply is that we have no knowledge of the revelation of 1882 having been presented to the Church. This revelation called Heber J. Grant into the Quorum of Twelve. Then are we to assume the call to be null and void, and is that revelation to be rejected as the Church has now rejected the revelation of 1886?

It is equally true that God's messages revealing to His Prophets in this

dispensation the plans for temple building, temple ordinances, the pattern of the garment of the holy Priesthood, etc.—all coming through direct revelation, were none of them presented to the Church for its official acceptance. They were Priesthood matters, pure and simple, and are today, as they were when given, binding upon the Priesthood and Saints generally whether the Church, as an organization, wishes to receive them or not.

In the Revelation of 1882 the Lord said to President Taylor, "Let my servants George Teasdale and Heber J. Grant be appointed to fill the vacancies in the Twelve," etc. The Lord did not add, "providing the Church will consent to it." There was no alternative: **"Let them be appointed,"** and if the Church does not like it let it lump it. God's decrees are not subject to church rules or dictation. He is bigger than the Church. Yet, according to the reasoning of Elders Ivins and Ballard, and of the "Official Statement," these holy ordinances and divine commands are binding only when ratified by the Church. Incidentally, it may be said in truth that perhaps only a tithe of the Revelations given to Joseph Smith and his successors in office, have been published in the Doctrine and Covenants for the benefit of the Church. The Church, being an auxiliary organization to that of Priesthood is entitled to only such revelations as the Lord through the Priesthood, deems wise to intrust it with.

At the time of the "Official Statement" referred to, denying the existence of the revelation of 1886, Elder B. H. Roberts, Assistant Church Historian and one of the Presidency in the First Quorum of Seventies, declared to friends now living that the revelation was in existence and was known to be so by the Church leaders, and that it was genuine.

George Q. Cannon, first counselor in the First Presidency under John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff and Lorenzo

Snow, and one of the five men set apart to perpetuate the principle of plural marriage under Priesthood authority, informed the writer (1898 or 9) that President Taylor did arrange the matter and that it was by this authority that his son Abraham H. Cannon took a plural wife after the Manifesto of 1890.

A photostat copy of the revelation of 1886, written by President John Taylor himself, and which now is presumably in the possession of the President of the Church, was published in TRUTH of October, 1938, Vol. 4, pp. 84-5, giving definite and unmistakable evidence of the fact that John Taylor did write the document. That it was given out by John Taylor has been shown. The facts admit of but one conclusion: either the revelation is not genuine and President Taylor was a false prophet and a wicked deceiver, or it is genuine and the present leaders of the Church are guilty of betraying heaven, of trying to deceive the Saints and of sailing under false colors. Will the present leaders say—dare they say it—that John Taylor was not a Prophet of God and that the document in question is not genuine?

By way of diversion: Today the signatures of certain members of the Church are demanded to a document declaring the leaders of the Church not to be living "double-lives," and repudiating those who may claim they are. If making statements contrary to well known facts, and if the act of one high Church official contradicting the words of another high official in the Church on questions of fact, constitute double-living or deceitfully living—and according to our understanding of English it surely does—the case is proved; and forcing the Saints to sign such a document but adds hypocrisy to the "double-life" act.

President John Taylor's mission was to champion truth. That he did so loyally, intelligently, courageously, and manfully cannot be successfully denied.

He was a mountain of strength and power. His administration was characterized by a continuous stream of revelation. He did converse with the Lord and with the Prophet Joseph Smith on that memorable night of September 26-27, 1886, and at the Lord's behest he did set men apart to perpetuate the principle of plural marriage as stated; and that organization is still intact and is functioning as the Lord intended it should. President Taylor was faithful to the commandments of the Lord. He established truth on a sounder footing giving to it its bearings, and his name and memory shall never become faded in the minds of the honest and righteous.

These facts are presented to the Saints at this time as a further warning against the rejection of the law of plural marriage, which is a necessary part of celestial marriage—and the living of which law is necessary to a complete salvation and exaltation.

### **Hymn Dedicated to the Memory of PRESIDENT JOHN TAYLOR By Ethel Cooper**

(Tune: An Angel From On High)

Apostacy appeared  
Within the House of God,  
And many weakened Saints  
Forsook the Iron Rod:  
The "Lion of the Lord" arose—  
While enemies of God oppose.  
(Repeat last two lines)

Incased in flames of fire  
John Taylor took a stand,  
And by the power of God  
Defended His command:  
Forsake the powers of life for death?  
Not while my God will give me breath!

That Martyr for His sake  
Defended truth and right,  
That we who love our God,  
May bask within its light:  
O let us in His footsteps trod,  
Defend the truth and praise our God.

O Holy man of God,  
A Prophet and a Seer,  
May we meet you someday  
When Christ shall reappear:  
And all the world will then rejoice  
That you for God made such a choice.