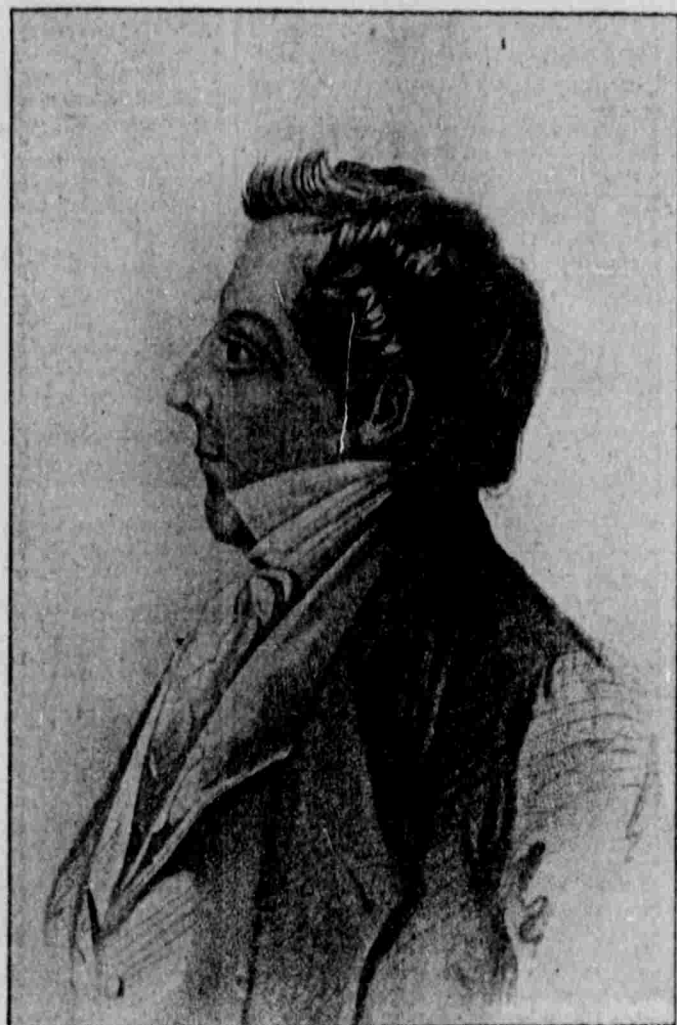


REMINISCENCES OF THE PROPHET JOSEPH SMITH.

BY PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

THE first time I saw the Prophet Joseph Smith I was about eighteen years of age. It was about the year 1832, in the fall of the year. It was rumored that the Prophet was going to hold a meeting in Hiram, Portage county, Ohio, about two miles from my father's home. Having heard many stories about him, my curiosity was considerably aroused and I thought I would take advantage of this opportunity to see and hear him. Accordingly, in company with some of the members of my father's family, I went to Hiram. When we reached there the people were already assembled in a small bower; there were about one hundred and fifty or two hundred people present. The meeting



JOSEPH SMITH, THE PROPHET.

had already commenced and Joseph Smith was standing in the door of Father Johnson's house, looking into the bower and addressing the people. I made a critical examination as to his appearance, his dress, and his manner as I heard him speak. His remarks were confined principally to his own experiences, especially the visitation of the angel, giving a strong and powerful testimony in regard to these marvelous manifestations. At first he seemed a little diffident and spoke in a low voice, but as he proceeded he became very strong and powerful, and seemed to affect the whole audience with the feeling that he was honest and sincere. It certainly influenced me in this way and made impressions upon me that remain until the present day.

THE PROPHET'S GENIALITY AND KINDNESS.

Not long after this meeting he baptized my mother and two of my sisters, Laura and Eliza R. Snow, into the Church, generally known as the Mormon Church. Soon after this Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were dragged from their beds at night by a mob; both were inhumanly whipped and tarred and feathered.

Luke and Lyman Johnson, with whom I had been intimately acquainted all through my boyhood days, received the Gospel and were ordained Apostles. After this I attended high school and college and partially forgot the effect of the meeting described, as my mind was diverted in other directions.

The next time I saw the Prophet was at his own house in Kirtland. After I was introduced to him he invited me to take dinner with him. He seemed to have changed considerably in his appearance since I last saw him before. He was very ready in conversation, and had apparently lost that reserve and diffident feeling that he seemed then to partake of. He was free and easy in his talk with me, making me feel perfectly at home in his presence. I remember this meeting and conversation as if it were but yesterday. He sat down at one end of the table and I sat next to him. I felt at ease with him as if we had been special friends for years. He was very familiar. During my stay in Kirtland, in the fall and winter of 1835 and 1836, I attended the high school, meeting the Prophet Joseph very often and under many circumstances, sometimes at his home, sometimes on the street, sometimes at the close of meetings shaking hands with him and at other times while he was overseeing public business.

I will relate an instance which goes to show one of his traits of character that I learned later to be very strong—his deep feelings of kindness towards animals. There was a steep hill in Kirtland which was being leveled, and quite a number of workmen were engaged. President Smith was there and I met him with his first counselor, Sidney Rigdon. The Prophet was overseeing the work. One of the brethren came up to the Prophet, carrying a nest full of young mice. He showed them to Joseph, who after looking at them, seemingly with great interest, said to the workman: "Pretty little innocent things, take them back and put them where their mother can find them."

I attended the meetings in the Temple regularly and heard the Prophet discourse upon the grandest of subjects. At times he was filled with the Holy Ghost, speaking as with the voice of an archangel and filled with the power of God, his whole person shone and his face was lightened until it appeared as the whiteness of the driven snow.

HIS DISLIKE OF ASSUMED SANCTITY.

One time when the Temple walls in Nauvoo were about fifteen feet high, (it was on Sunday morning,) President Smith came up to the meeting grounds accompanied by a tall, fine-looking gentleman, well proportioned and about six feet high. He was a Presbyterian minister, as I learned later. They both came into the Temple and walked up the aisle together. There was a large crowd of people present. He gave the gentleman a seat on the stand and then sat down beside him. The minister seemed very peculiar, had a pious appearance,

seemed not to move a single muscle, and was intensely solemn. When anything was said that created merriment or laughter among the people, the minister remained perfectly quiet, not even showing the least change of countenance. The Prophet felt very well that morning and made a fine appearance as he walked up to the stand. He noticed there was some confusion among the people in getting their seats because of the crowd. He saw the minister sitting on the wall with his chin resting upon his cane, who seemingly had forgotten his duties. The Prophet called out, "Mr. Marshal, please take that cane away from your mouth and come down here and help these people to get their seats, and if you don't do it I shall walk down the aisle myself and swing my hands from side to side until there is room for the people to pass through the crowd and get their seats." This, of course, caused some laughter among the people, but the minister was as solemn and still as a statue. After the opening of the meeting President Smith got up and I never heard him speak with more power than on this occasion. The people were delighted, he was filled with the Spirit of God and spoke with great force and eloquence. At times he spoke lightly, and at other times he explained the mysteries of the kingdom. The change was so noticeable that it seemed he was elevated into heaven while addressing the people who were on the earth, and then returned again to more familiar themes.

FREQUENTLY TOLD AMUSING ANECDOTES.

The Prophet was always very pleasant and at times he was given to telling anecdotes. I will relate one in his own words as nearly as I can remember them:

"Now this anecdote that I am going to tell you is not for the purpose of casting reflections upon the Irish people, so if there are any Irish brethren and sisters here I don't want them to take any offense, for the Irish people, as a rule, are always willing and ready to act, and are often better prepared to meet an emergency than either the English or American people. I wish to say this much in behalf of the Irish. There are some people, some ministers of the Gospel, who feel that they ought always to be solemn and have a holy appearance and to present their religious views to everyone they meet, wherever or whenever it may be, and to try to force their belief upon others. I don't feel this way myself. If a person desires to hear what I have to say, I am pleased to bear my testimony to him but I never feel to force my views upon anyone. I have heard of a minister who was traveling in a buggy on a turnpike road in Vermont. He overtook an Irishman, stopped him, alighted from the buggy and approached the Irishman in this way: 'My dear friend, O my dear dying friend,' he said in a mournful voice, 'Do you know the awful state you are in?' 'Och, yis sor,' said the Irishman, 'to be sure I do sor. I'm in the State of Vermont.' Then the minister answered in his grave way: 'O, but, my dear dying friend, you do not understand me, I'm afraid you have lost your way entirely.' 'Och, no indade,' rejoined the Irishman, 'bedad an' I'm sure I have not sor, how kin a mon lose his way on a turnpike road sor?' 'But,' answered the minister, 'you do not understand me. Have you made your peace with Jesus?' 'No sor,' said the Irishman, 'indeed Olive no made for that same, for Jasus an' I have niver had inny fallin' out, sor.'

Joseph Smith was always natural and extremely calm, he never became confused or irritated by persons or things around him. Many ministers called upon him and endeavored to catch him when not upon his guard, doing something with which they might find fault, but when he was not in company his actions were always the same. He never was guilty of hypocrisy. He indulged in all healthful sports, and did not think it was unbecoming to play at ball, to run a foot race or to indulge in any other outdoor sports. One minister, while at the Prophet's home, happened to look out of the window and saw the Prophet engaged in wrestling in the garden with a friend. This, with other instances of innocent amusement convinced the minister of the Prophet's honesty and entire freedom from hypocrisy.

A COUNCIL WITH INDIAN CHIEFS.

I once met the Prophet at his home when he was being visited by a council of Indian chiefs who had been sent by their tribes from Georgia, having heard of the Prophet and that he was a man of God, they called upon him for counsel and advice. He was engaged in council with them when I called. The Indians knew him to be their true friend. I waited until he had finished his conversation and the Indians left the room. They were as fine looking Indian chiefs as I have ever beheld. They were perfect types of health, and attired in full Indian dress. After their departure, Brother Joseph told me who they were and for what purpose they had come. He told me with tears in his eyes that he was unable to help them. He seemed very much affected and very sorrowful during the entire time of our conversation which followed.

Another strong trait in the Prophet's character was his innocent confidence in mankind. I will relate an incident that I remember, illustrative of this: One morning as he was walking along one of the streets in Nauvoo he met a brother who seemed very much distressed about something. He looked to be in great trouble. The Prophet addressed him in a friendly way, asking him what troubled him. The man said, 'Yes, I am in great trouble, I am in debt to a man who is suing me, and I haven't a cent to pay him.' The Prophet asked him the amount of his debt. 'Twenty-five dollars,' replied the man. 'Oh, is that all?' asked the Prophet, at the same time putting his hand into his pocket and giving the man twenty-five dollars, saying, 'Here, pay your debt, and God bless you.' The Prophet asked no questions regarding the debt as most people would have done but he saw the man in distress his sympathy was so perfect that he was pleased to be able to assist him without asking any further questions.

INCREASE OF HIS POWER AND INFLUENCE.

Toward the latter part of his life Joseph Smith became a master of strength and influence over his fellows. This fact was brought very vividly to my attention on my return from a mission to Europe. I noticed and even remarked to him that he had changed very much since I last saw him; that he had become stronger and more powerful. He admitted this and said that the Lord had endowed him with additional portions of His Spirit.

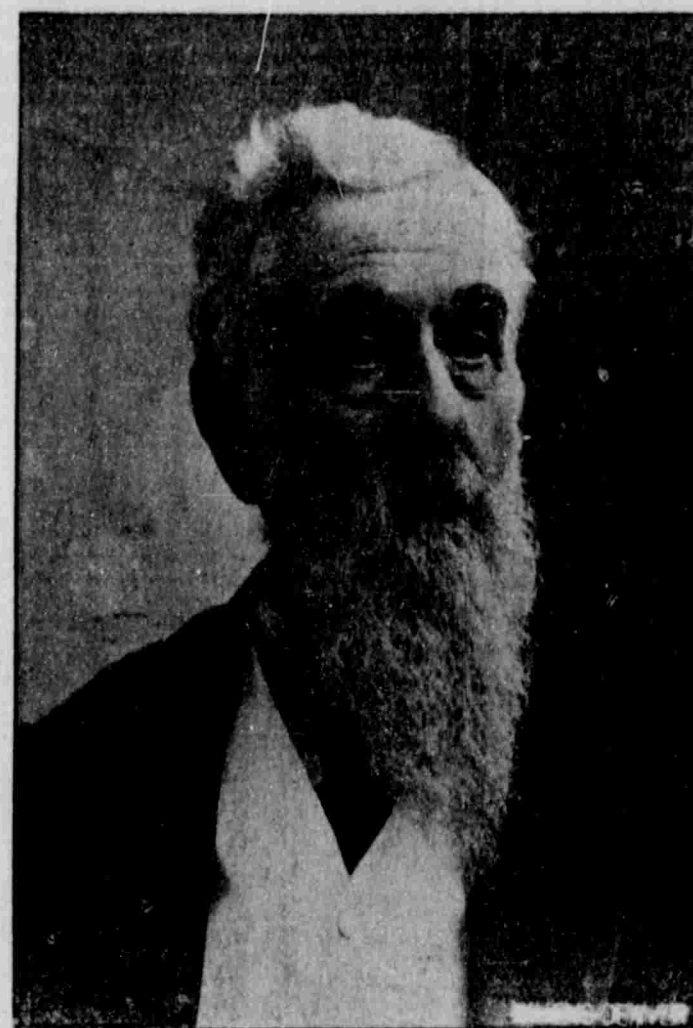
One day he called the brethren of the Twelve Apostles together and other prominent Elders of the Church to appoint them to their several labors and missions. Each sat and waited with much anxiety to hear the word of the Prophet concerning his future duties. They felt that they were in the presence of a superior being. While in Kirtland the Prophet did not seem to possess that strength and power, and some of his brethren were not afraid to oppose him and even to threaten him. A mob gathered to do him injury and he had to flee for his life, but in later years he had become so strong in the power of the Lord that the people felt it. It was so on this occasion. The Elders realized his superior strength. 'Brother Brigham,' he said, 'I want you to go east and attend to the affairs of the Church in the Eastern States, and Brother Kimball may accompany you.' Turning to another he said, 'You turn your attention to the publication of our paper,' and thus appointed each one to his special mission; all accepting his word as the mind of the Lord.

On another occasion, Joseph Smith had indulged in playing a game of ball with some of the young men in Nauvoo. When his brother Hyrum saw it he wished to correct the Prophet and even rebuked him, saying that such conduct was not becoming in a Prophet of the Lord. The Prophet answered in a mild voice, 'Brother Hyrum, my mingling with the boys in a harmless sport like this does not injure me in any way, but on the other hand it makes them happy and draws their hearts nearer to mine, and who

knows but there may be young men among them who may sometime lay down their lives for me.'

THE MAGNETISM OF HIS PRESENCE.

The Prophet had the power to impress in a remarkable manner all who approached him. There was something about him which went to their hearts. This was particularly the case with brethren when receiving from him their appointments to go forth and preach the Gospel. The inspiration that flowed from him possessed their souls and his words penetrated to the innermost recesses of their being. They loved him, and believed in him, and were ready



PRESIDENT LORENZO SNOW.

to do whatever he directed for the furtherance of the work of God. He filled them with the power of his presence, and thrilled them with the testimony of his prophetic mission. There are many people in the world who possess an extraordinary spirit of friendship and warmth that everyone feels who meets them. I have met many such men, but never yet have I met another person in whose company I felt the peculiar and powerful influence that I felt while in the presence of the Prophet Joseph Smith. It was due to the great portion of the Spirit of God that he possessed, merely the shake of his hand would cause a person to become filled with this influence, and any sensitive nature would know that he was shaking the hand of an extraordinary person.

THE PROPHET JOSEPH ON PLURAL MARRIAGE.

I wish to relate in full a conversation that I had with the Prophet Joseph Smith concerning the principle of celestial marriage. I feel it my duty to do this as there are now but few persons living who heard from the Prophet's own lips his views and testimony concerning this principle. By doing so, however, I do not wish to convey the idea that plural marriages are now being contracted in any place in the world by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, but to the contrary, I do most solemnly testify that during my administration as President of the Church no such marriages have been contracted, neither to my knowledge have any such marriages been contracted since the Manifesto was issued by President Wilford Woodruff.

In the month of April, 1843, I returned from my European mission. A few days after my arrival at Nauvoo, when at President Joseph Smith's house, he said he wished to have some private talk with me, and requested me to walk out with him. It was toward evening, we walked a little distance and sat down on a large log that lay near the bank of the Mississippi river; he there and then explained to me the doctrine of plurality of wives.

He said that the Lord had revealed it to him and commanded him to have women sealed to him as wives; that he foresaw the trouble that would follow and sought to turn away from the commandment; that an angel from heaven appeared before him with a drawn sword, threatening him with destruction unless he went forward and obeyed the commandment.

He then told me that my sister Eliza R. Snow had been sealed to him as his wife for time and eternity.

He further said that the Lord would open the way, and I should have women sealed to me as wives. This conversation was prolonged, I think, one hour or more, in which he told me many important things.

I solemnly declare before God and holy angels, as I hope to come forth in the morning of the resurrection, that the above statement is true.

I know that Joseph Smith was a true Prophet of the living God. I testify that he saw and spoke with God and with His Son Jesus Christ. The Lord gave me this living testimony and it has been burning within my soul ever since I received it. I now give it unto the whole world. I not only testify to all mankind that Joseph Smith was sent of God and that the work that was established through him is the work of God, but warn all the nations of the earth concerning the predictions made by the Prophet, and testify in the most solemn manner that I know them to be true.

Lorenzo Snow

TITHING, THE REVENUE LAW OF THE CHURCH.

Discourse Delivered by President Joseph F. Smith, at the Quarterly Conference of the Salt Lake Stake, Sunday, Sept. 10, 1899.

I desire to put myself into the hands of the Lord, that He may guide me in what I shall say by the influence of His spirit.

Those who were present yesterday at the conference had the privilege of listening to President Snow in a very interesting and instructive discourse upon the principle of tithing. As there seems to be very many here today who were not here yesterday, I will

take the liberty of reading the revelation that was given to the Prophet Joseph Smith in relation to this principle. This revelation was given July 8, 1838, in answer to the question, 'O Lord, show unto Thy servants how much thou requirest of the properties of the people for a tithing.' The Lord says:

'Verily, thus saith the Lord, I require all their surplus property to be put into the hands of the bishop of my church of Zion.

For the building of mine house, and for the laying of the foundation of Zion and for the Priesthood, and for the debts of the Presidency of my church; And this shall be the beginning of the tithing of my people.'

It will be remembered that at the time this revelation was given, the members of the Church in Zion, and in

Ohio, were living under a higher law—the law of consecration. Under that law those who embraced the Gospel did so with their whole being; All they possessed was put upon the altar, for the service of the Lord and for the accomplishment of the work He had started in the earth. But it developed that many of the people were covetous and selfish, and were not disposed to put themselves and all that they possessed upon the altar. In giving the law of consecration, the Lord designed that those who came into His Church should hold themselves, together with all they had, subject to His will and direction, they were to be stewards over their own property except such of it as was necessary for the building of the house of God, and for carrying on of His work. But the people did not keep that law. There were too many of them like Ananias and Sapphira, who were too covetous to give all they possessed, as the

Lord required. The result was, the people brought themselves under condemnation for disobedience; and they continued in this way until the Lord saw fit to withdraw or suspend that law, so that they might not increase their disobedience. In its place an inferior law was given—the law of tithing; yet it is to be a standing law unto the Church. All who receive the Gospel are to obey this law. Thus we understand in the forefront of this revelation, that those who came into the Church at that time were expected to give all their surplus property into the hands of the Bishop. That was to be the beginning of the tithing of the people.

'And after that, those who have thus been tithed, shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually; and this shall be a standing law unto them forever, for my holy Priesthood, saith the Lord. Verily I say unto you, it shall come to pass, that all those who gather unto the land of Zion shall be tithed of their surplus properties, and shall observe this law, or they shall not be found worthy to abide among you.'

'Tithed of their surplus properties'—

what does that mean? some may ask. I understand it to mean that when a man embraces the Gospel he will pay a tenth of all he possesses at that time, and that after that he will pay a tenth of that which the Lord gives to him, annually. I do not think these words are susceptible of any other interpretation. The revelation is plain and to the point. It goes on:

'And I say unto you, if my people observe not this law, to keep it holy, and by this law sanctify the land of Zion unto me, that my statutes and my judgments may be kept thereon, that it may be most holy, behold, verily I say unto you, it shall not be a land of Zion unto you; and this shall be an ensample unto all the Stakes of Zion. Even so, Amen.'

We have had this law before us ever since 1828. Those of us who have lived that long have been under it all the time. It has been before me ever since I was born; for I happened to be born in that year. I have grown up under this law, and I have come to understand that it is the law of revenue for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The perfect law of revenue

was that the people should hold all they possessed subject to the Lord's direction. But the Lord found that we were too selfish for this, we had not advanced far enough in the scale of intelligence and of confidence in the Lord to carry out that principle and to yield up, at any time He should require, all that we possessed for the accomplishment of His will. Seeing that we were not able to live up to the perfect law, He gave us a lighter law.

If the perfect law of God were in force, the Lord would not only have a tenth to use for the accomplishment of His purposes, but He would have all the people had. And if the people were truly converted to the Gospel and had the right spirit, they would feel that it was a happy privilege for them to live so that all they had could be given freely and without restraint to the bidding of the Almighty for the accomplishment of His will. The day will come when we will see how narrow, how covetous, how small we were when we would civil or contend with the Lord for one moment in relation to property matters. The earth is the Lord's and the fulness thereof. We are His and if we were only full of light

intelligence as He is, or as Christ was while He was upon the earth, we would have no desire in our hearts except to do the will of God. We would not hesitate to use anything we might possess for the accomplishment of His purposes. The Lord is able to take care of His own. He is just and righteous; He is not unmerciful to His children, nor does He require of them anything that is unjust or unnecessary. If he should require a sacrifice such as He did of Job, for instance, He is able to make up four-fold, five, ten-fold or a hundred-fold of that which He requires at our hands, provided we submit to His requirements without reluctance or hesitancy. And if we understood things as we should, we would feel to say, 'Father, we are in thine hand, and all we have is upon the altar, subject to thy bidding.' But the Lord does not require all we have at the present time. He asks now for one-tenth of our interest annually, to be given into the storehouse of the Lord, for the feeding of the poor, for the clothing of the naked, for the ministering unto those who are sick and helping for the spread of the Gospel to the nations of the earth, for the gathering