

only interested in his genealogy, but was very anxious to learn, inasmuch that he sought diligently and found out the right of the first man, who is Adam or first father, through the fathers unto him. Any one desiring it can read a list of the first fathers or patriarchs in Doctrine and Covenants, section 107, paragraphs 40-57, giving the list from Adam to Methuselah, the grandfather of Noah.

Abraham further says that the record of the Patriarchs concerning the right of the Priesthood, the Lord preserved in His own hands.

Now, how did he come by the record which gave him the knowledge of his right to the Priesthood? Undoubtedly it was brought by Noah in the ark through the flood. Other history informs us that Abraham spent a number of years of his early life with Noah and Shem, and was taught by them in all the knowledge of God and His works. Thus whatsoever knowledge Noah and Shem were possessed of or whatsoever records they brought through the flood in the ark, all this was available, no doubt, to Abraham, and he being a believer in the Almighty God, became a man of such extraordinary faith that nothing could be required which was too great for him, and so he became the father of the faithful, and the friend of God.

I have read these portions of scripture that we may get the subject of keeping records and of writing history, especially sacred history, before our minds for consideration. Since the temples have been constructed and the ordinances therein began to be administered, our people have obtained a better understanding of the importance of keeping family records, family history and genealogy, than before. We have had one among us who has seen from the early days of the Church the necessity of this and has entertained the subject with great interest, and perhaps with as great importance as anyone could when there was so little necessary use for the same, and that is our worthy President Woodruff. He has from the beginning of his public career kept a journal and a history, and we are indebted in a great measure to his exertion, together with that of some others, for many great and powerful sermons which the Prophet Joseph delivered in the city of Nauvoo. We are indebted, I say, to his records and his efforts for very many of these precious truths that we have now on the page of history to enrich ourselves with. Some of the most important matters pertaining to the most sacred council that were instituted by the Prophet Joseph are thus brought down to our present time, and by them we are made the happy recipients of many blessings and ordinances. In later times we have been limited in our efforts to write up the history of the Church, because of our records being in a scattered condition, and because of our not having yet obtained the historical items necessary from the more distant portions of the Church. We have had Brother Jensen visiting from ward to ward, from stake to stake, from mission to mission, gathering up the early history of the founding of the settlements in Utah and the surrounding territories. He has been with you, learned of your condition, and has gathered up what information he could get necessary for a faithful history of all the stakes of Zion, so far as we know. Through his report to me as historian, I am informed that there are wards organized and going on

for quite a length of time, that have no semblance of any record kept among them. To this fact I wish to call the attention not only of the presidents of stakes, the Bishops of wards, presidents of quorums and councils and the heads of families, but of all the people and I wish them to know and understand that it is time they were turning their minds upon this subject. They should keep more carefully the Church records while they also institute family history. You that have been in the Church many years and are raising up sons and daughters around you, should teach and instruct them in this matter, and impress them while in their schoolboy days to keep some notation of all their general doings in the earth, keep an account of themselves. I know they will feel just as you and I felt: what is the use of writing that I went to the Brigham Young Academy to learn? What is the use of telling that I went off a couple of years to the South on a mission, or to England, or anywhere else? It may seem of small moment to them now; but when your sons are old, their hair white, and they look back upon half or three-fourths of a century of experience, perhaps a Bishop, president of Stake, founder of a colony or president of a Temple, then they would give a treasure for a faithful record of the experience they had passed through, who they had blessed, baptized, confirmed, ordained, and in what countries and languages they had done it. It is time that these brethren who are bald and gray with age were instituting this order of things in their households, that they, as the heads of their families, their tribes or their generation, may establish a history that shall go down to the generations after them. Subsequent generations will want to know what part their father, their grandfather or their great-grandfather took in establishing this Church—if he was a High Priest, an Elder, a president of a stake, a Bishop or a Bishop's counselor, or held any other office in the Priesthood. He ought not only to keep an account of this for his own present benefit as long as he endures, but also see to it before he departs that he leaves a good record of the events of his life to his kindred—of the work that he has performed in the Temples and of the missions that he has fulfilled—that it may go down to his children, that they may realize that they are under obligations to him for the blessings of the Gospel that he has caused to descend upon their heads to establish them in the midst of God's people in the last days. I request you, my brethren the Bishops, that you look carefully after the interests of your people in this regard; see that your clerks keep good and perfect records of every birth in your ward, certainly of the birth of every child that belongs to the Saints. Some of the children that are now born of those who are unbelievers may rise up and through your instruction and ministration become Elders and ministers of God in the Church while they are in the flesh, and may bless you for the benefits you have bestowed upon them. I wish to urge the presidents of stakes, and the bishops of wards to look after this matter and see that records are kept properly in the wards, in the stakes and in all the Church organizations included in your presidencies. These records should be inspected critically by you, and frequently not only that they are faithfully kept but on durable

paper and with indelible ink. No recorder or clerk should be allowed to buy the books and keep them as his own, when Church matters are recorded in them. We had an example of this in early days. When President Joseph Smith received a revelation that John Whitmer was to be appointed Church historian, he got his book and kept records in it, and by and by, when the Prophet Joseph Smith wanted it to find data so that he could write his history, this man would not let him have the book, he having apostatized from the Church. He kept that book, and it was handed down in his generation. We have obtained a copy of the entire record, so while they keep the book, we have its contents. This sample is enough to give us a warning. In your Relief societies, your Mutual Improvement associations, your quorums, even down to the primary associations, there should be books provided by the organization, and paid for by it, and they should be the property of that body for whom the record is kept; and when it is full, it should be delivered carefully to the authorities of that body and held as Church property, that it may when wanted be brought to the Historian's office and be preserved in the archives of history for the benefit of future generations. Some who have gone on foreign missions have kept records of their labors in those missions, but we get no trace of them. Brethren, if you know of any such record, please bring it to the Historian's office; and if you cannot afford to lose the value of the book, we will pay for it.

Let me cite your mind to another grand and glorious topic. When it was determined that the Son of God should come in the flesh and take the supreme position of Redeemer of the world, how did He come? Israel had been trained to keep their genealogies, and when they came to search for His antecedents they found He had a most excellent and complete record. Matthew informs us that from Jesus back to David was fourteen generations; from David to Abraham was fourteen generations, and from Abraham to Noah was fourteen generations, and from Noah to Adam were ten generations. If He had not been able to furnish that pedigree, He would have had no credentials to the house of Israel of a worldly nature, as a man among men. But He proved His genealogy down through the most honorable line that could be traced; a lineage that any Israelite might be proud of.

The great Patriarch Abraham seems to have been not only deeply interested in but quite enthusiastic on this subject. On page 54 of the Pearl of Great Price he says:

But the records of the fathers, even the Patriarchs, concerning the right of the Priesthood, the Lord my God preserved in mine own hands, therefore a knowledge of the beginning of the creation, and also of the planets, and of the stars, as they were made known unto the fathers, have I kept even unto this day, and I shall endeavor to write some of these things upon this record, for the benefit of my posterity that shall come after me.

Now as he wrote for the benefit of his posterity, we may suppose that but for the vandalism that destroyed the several hundred thousand volumes that had been gathered under the Ptolemies from all parts of the known world into the museum and library and temples of Alexandria in Egypt and elsewhere, the