

Remarks by Sister Mary E. Lightener who was sealed to Joseph 61  
Smith in 1842. She is 87 years of age. B.Y.U. April 14, 1905

Well, my young brethren I can say I never was more surprised in my life than to be called upon to speak to you young men who are called upon to go into the mission field to preach the Gospel to the nations of the earth. It is true I have been in the Church from its beginning. Just six months after it was organized I joined it. I have been acquainted with all of those who were first members of this Church, with all of those who saw the plates and handled them; even those who saw the angel Moroni who came to them. I am well acquainted with every one of them and I have known them from the time that they came to Ohio until their death; I am the only living witness who was at the first meeting that the Prophet held in Kirtland. The Smith family were driven from New York, and a small Church had been organized. Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, and Ziba Peterson were members. Well I being anxious, though young, to learn about the plates from those who knew all about it, my mother and I went up to the Smith family the next night after they came to Kirtland. As I went in there were two or three others present. They were all there, the whole Smith family, from the old gentleman and his wife to all the sons and daughters. As we stood there talking to them Joseph and Martin Harris came in. Joseph looked around very solemnly. It was the first time some of them had ever seen him. Said he: 'there are enough here to hold a little meeting.' They got a board and put it across two chairs to make seats. Martin Harris sat on a little box at Joseph's feet. They sang and prayed. Joseph got up and began to speak to us. As he began to speak very solemnly and very earnestly all at once his countenance changed and he stood mute. Those who looked at him that day said there was a search light within him, over every part of his body. I never saw anything like it on the earth. I could not ~~take my eyes off him~~ take my eyes off ~~him~~ of him. He got so white that anyone who saw him would have thought he was transparent. I remember I thought I could almost see the bones through the flesh. I have been through my changes since, but that is photographed on my brain. I shall never forget it. He stood some minutes. He looked over the congregation as if to pierce every heart. Said he: 'do you know who has been in your midst?' One of the Smiths said 'an angel of the Lord.' Martin Harris said: "it was our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ". Joseph put his hands down on Martin and said: "God revealed that to you. Brothers and Sisters, the spirit of God has been in your midst. The Savior has been here this night and I want to tell you to remember it. There is a vail over your eyes for you ~~can~~ could not endure to look upon Him. You must be fed with milk not with strong meat. I want you to remember this as if it were the last thing that escaped my lips. He has given all of you to me and has sealed you up to everlasting life that where he is there you may be also. And if you are tempted of Satan say 'get thee behind me, Satan.'" These words are figured upon my brain; and I never took my eyes off his countenance. Then he knelt down and prayed. I have never heard anything like it before or since. I felt that he was talking to the Lord and that power rested down upon us in every fiber of our bodies, and we received a sermon from the lips of the representative of God. Much has come and gone from me through the powers

and vicissitudes of this Church. I have been in almost every mob. I have been driven about and told I would be shot and had a gun pointed at me, but I stayed with the Church until it was driven from Nauvoo. The words of the Prophet that had been revealed to him have always been with me from the beginning to the end of the Gospel. Every principle that has been given in the Church by the Prophet is true. I know whereon I stand, I know what I believe, I know what I know and I know what I testify to you is the living truth. As I expect to meet it at the bar of the eternal Jehovah it is true. And when you stand before the bar you will know. He preached polygamy and he not only preached it but he practiced it. I am a living witness to it. It was given to him before he gave it to the Church. An Angel came to him and the last time he came with a drawn sword in his hand and told Joseph if he did not go into that principle he would slay him. Joseph said he talked to him. He said in the Book of Mormon it was an abomination in the eyes of the Lord, and they were to adhere to these things except the Lord speak. I am the first being that the revelation was given to him for and I was one thousand miles away in Missouri for we went up to Jackson County in '41. I was there in all the tribulations and trials. I have been in houses that have been stoned. The rocks have been thrown criss-cross in every direction. I have seen the Brethren shot and ruined for life. I saw the first martyr dead and a more heavenly corpse I never saw or expect to see on the face of the earth. His face was so happy. I have seen our Bishop tarred and feathered, in the streets of Missouri. They took off his shirt and covered him with tar and then took a pillow and turned the feathers over him. I look at him and I thought if ever man was counted worthy to be a martyr he was. His life proved it for he lived an upright honorable life and was beloved by the Prophet while he lived and after he died the Prophet honored him. Two of his sisters were Joseph's wives. Emma took them by the hand and gave them to Joseph. I asked him if Emma knew about me, and he said, 'Emma thinks the world of you.' I was not sealed to him until I had a witness. I had been dreaming for a number of years I was his wife. I thought I was a great sinner. I prayed to God to take it from me for I felt it was a sin; but when Joseph sent for me he told me all of these things. 'Well' said I, 'don't you think it was an angel of the Devil that told you these things?' Said he, 'No. It was an angel of God. God Almighty showed me the difference between ~~an~~ an angel of Light and Satan's angels. The angel came to me three times between the year of '34 and '42 and said I was to obey that principle or he would lay me.' 'But,' said he, 'they called me a false and fallen prophet but I am more in favor with my God this day than I ever was in all my life before. I know that I shall be saved in the Kingdom of God. I have the oath of God upon it and God cannot lie. All that He gives me I shall take with me for I have that authority and that power conferred upon me.' Well, I talked with him for ~~xxx~~ a long time and finally I told him, 'I would have a witness.' Said I, 'If God told you that why does he not tell me?' He asked me if I was going to be

a traitor. 'I have never told a mortal and shall never tell a mortal I ..... "Well,' said he, 'pray earnestly for the angel said to me you should have a witness'. Well Brigham Young was with me. He said if I had a witness he wanted to know it. 'Why should I tell you?' said I. 'Well' said he, 'I want to know for myself.' Said he 'do you know what Joseph said? Since we left the office the angel appeared to him and told him he was well pleased with him and that you should have a witness.' I made it a subject of prayer and I worried about it because I did not dare to speak to a living being except Brigham Young. I went out and got between three hay-stacks where no one could see me. As I knelt down I thought why not pray as Moses did? He prayed with his hands raised. When his hands were raised Israel was victorious but when they were not raised the Philistines were victorious. I lifted my hands and I have heard Joseph say the angels covered their faces. I knelt down and if ever a poor mortal prayed I did. A few nights after that an angel of the Lord came to me and if ever a thrill went through a mortal it went through me. I gazed upon the clothes and figure but the eyes were like lightning. They pierced me from the crown of my head to the soles of my feet. I was frightened almost to death for a moment. I tried to waken my aunt but I could not. The angel leaned over me and the light was very great although it was night. When my aunt woke up she said she had been a figure in white robes pass from our bed to my mother's bed and pass out of the window. Joseph came up the next sabbath. He said, 'Have you had a witness yet?' 'No,' 'Well' said he 'the angel expressly told me you should have.' ~~XXX~~ Said I 'I have not had a witness, but I have seen something I have never seen before. I saw an angel and I was frightened almost to death. I did not speak.' He studied a while and put his elbows on his knees and his face in his hands. He looked up and said, 'How could you have been such a coward?' Said I, 'I was weak.' "'Did you think to say,' Father help me?'" 'No.' 'Well if you had just said that your mouth would have been opened for that was an angel of the living God. He came to you with more knowledge, intelligence, and light than I ever ... to reveal.' I ~~XX~~ Said, 'If that was an angel of light why did he not speak to me?' You covered ..... "Will he ever come again?" He looked around and then he thought a moment and said, 'No. Not the same one, but if you are faithful you shall see greater things than that.' And then he gave me three signs of what would take place in my own family, although my husband was far away from me at the time. Every word came true. I went forward and was sealed to him. Brigham Young performed the sealing, and Heber C. Kimball the blessing. I know he had six wives and I have known some of them from childhood up. I know he had three children. They told me. I think two are living today but they are not known as his children as they go by other names. These are things I can testify to as the living truth and I have told it to the Josephites. There is a great deal said about this Church and the Josephites. I never knew of Joseph appointing him to be the prophet. I have never known him to say it, and I have known the boy ever since he was twelve years of age. I heard Joseph say this: 'I have rolled this Kingdom off of my shoulders on to

the shoulders of the Twelve and they can carry out this work and build up His kingdom'. Said he, 'I am tired, I have been mobbed, I have suffered so much, from outsiders and from my own family. Some of the brethren think they can carry this work on better than I can, far better. I have asked the Lord to take me away. I have to seal my testimony to this generation with my blood. I have to do it for this work will never progress until I am gone for the testimony is of no force until the testator is dead. People little know who I am when they talk about me, and they never will know until they see me weighed in the balance in the Kingdom of God. Then they will know who I am and see me as I am. I dare not tell them and they do not know me'. These words were spoken with such power that they penetrated the heart of every soul that believed on him. Now about those Josephites--I have not a word to say about Joseph. He is doing a good work in the first principles. He does not believe in endowments; he does not believe in some other things; and he does not recognize this Church as the true Church. But we have one criterion to go by. Joseph said, 'The servant cannot be greater than the Master. If they persecute us they will persecute you.' Has his Son Joseph ever been persecuted? Have they been whipped, and murdered in cold blood? But let me tell you this Gospel is going to spread, and you young men who are going on missions give your hearts to God, for He said "Young men, give me thy heart." And if you do give Him your hearts and pray to the heavens above the spirit of God and the Holy Ghost will rest upon you. If the great soul that rules in heaven and on earth, and the inspiration of the spirit comes down and rests in your bosom you will be able to speak the Light to the people and you will gain a great reward. Just speaking of yourself in your own strength the spirit is withdrawn. You will have no power that will reach the heart. It may tickle the ear, but you must have the power of the Almighty. You must have the angels to be your companions and rest upon you. Let them be your guide in health and trouble. May you ever drink of the water of intelligence that flows from the throne of God. God, Almighty will guide you and direct you and you will walk in the paths of truth and you will receive your reward as His servants for the good deeds you have done on this earth. This is my testimony and I hope and pray you will believe me for I have received it from the servants heart, and when that servants come he will own his people if they are ~~firm~~ faithful and humble. A trying hour and darkest hours are in the future before us and it is only those who are humble, contrite, and honest before God and endure to the end who shall receive the blessings. Faith will be trampled down and there will be detractions come upon those who are not honest. These are things I tell you and they are true and you will see that they are, if you live long enough. All I have said to you about the future will come to pass just as sure as the sun shines in the heavens. May God bless you and let you be on the alert to receive the words of light that are given to you by His servants. You will all be tried by darkness and the powers of darkness will come to you, but put your trust in your heavenly father, let him be your guide and support for He is the everlasting light, worlds without ends. I hope you will excuse me for

being a little agitated, but it is a terrible .... for me to come and get up to speak. But I want you to remember what I have said, that is my testimony, as long as you live. Joseph told me I would see great things than the angel. Since then I have seen other persons; three came together and stood before me just as the sun went down,--Joseph, Hyrum and Heber C. Kimball. It was prophesied that I should see Joseph before I died. Still I had not been thinking about that. I was thinking about a sermon I had heard. All at once I looked up and they stood before me. Joseph stood in the middle in a circle like the new moon and he stood with his arms over their shoulders. They bowed to me about a dozen times or more. I pinched myself to be sure I was awake, and I looked around the room to see where I had placed my things. I thought I would shake hands with them. They saw my confusion and understood it and they laughed, and I thought Brother Kimball would kill himself laughing. I had no fear. As I went to shake hands with them they bowed, smiled, and began to fade. They went like a cloud behind a mountain. It gave me more courage and hope than I ever had before.

Sister Lightner stated that she had ten children, seven of them were boys and she had raised three of them to manhood. She has one daughter in the Church.

/s/ Mary E. R. Lightner.

Sadie Preston - Stenographer.

Being asked concerning her husband Sister Lightner said. 'My husband did not belong to the Church. I begged and pled with him to join but he would not. He said he ~~xxxx~~ did not believe in it though he though a great deal of Joseph. He sacrificed his property rather than testify against Joseph, Hyrum and George A. Smith. After he said this I went forward and was sealed to Joseph for Eternity.'

We her daughters and granddaughters have heard her tell this and much more ever since we can remember.

/s/ Mary R. Rollins

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