

MERCY RACHEL FIELDING THOMPSON

This is a letter written by Mercy R. Thompson. The following was written on the envelope:

From Mercy R. Thompson:

To: The oldest living female descendant of Robert Taylor, son of Mary Jane Taylor, grandson of Mercy Fielding Thompson. If there is no such descendant living, give it to the oldest daughter of Martha Ann Smith Harris, daughter of Hyrum and Mary Smith.

Dedicated to the Anniversary of the Church--The first Grand Jubilee of the Church, April 1st, 1930.

The Letter

Salt Lake City, Utah
December 20th, 1880

I am Mercy Rachel Thompson, daughter of John Fielding and Rachel Ibbotson. I was born in Bedfordshire, England, June 15, 1807. I emigrated to America with my brother, Joseph Fielding, to Upper Canada (the Toronto area, called Upper because it was on the upper St. Laurence River), North America, in 1832, where I heard and embraced the everlasting Gospel thru the preaching of Parley P. Pratt, an Apostle of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day-Saints, in May 1836.

Removed to Kirtland, Ohio in May 1837, where I married to Robert Blashard Thompson by Joseph Smith, the Prophet. I received a patriarchal blessing through Joseph Smith, Sr., Patriarch of the Church of Jesus Christ in the Temple. We (my husband and I) then returned to Canada where he was appointed to journey with Hyrum Smith, to whom my sister had been married December 1837 in Far West, Missouri. We arrived there in May where my daughter Mary Jane was born June 14, 1838.

To describe the sufferings and privations we endured while there would be past my skill and would make this sketch too lengthy. Some few things however I will relate. My husband with many of the brethren being persued by a mob fled into the wilderness in November, leaving me with an infant not five months old, through months of distressing suspense before I could get any intelligence from him. During this time I stayed with my sister, who had given birth to a son, November 13, 1838, while her husband was in prison. She took a severe cold and was unable to attend to her domestic duties for four months. This caused much of the family, which was very large, to rest upon me. Mobs were continually threatening to

My dear children when you read this letter I shall have passed away very likely; although my blessing says that if I am faithful I shall never sleep in death, but shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye and be caught up to meet the Savior in the clouds and be forever with Him.

I know not how this may be but I DEDICATE MYSELF AND ALL I HAVE ON THIS EARTH INTO THE HANDS OF MY HEAVENLY FATHER, asking him in the name of Jesus Christ to grant that me and my companion and my children and those that I love may be saved in the Kingdom of Heaven. Even so, Amen.

My children's names, and birthdates

William J., August 4, 1859, Salt Lake City; Joseph A., August 19, 1861; Hyrum S., August 19, 1863; Mary Emily, October 23, 1865; Franklin H., March 10, 1867; Lucy Smith, March 10, 1870, Provo; John F., June 28, 1872, Provo; Mercy, March 30, 1874, Provo; Zina Christeen, May 13, 1876, Provo; Martha Artimisa, June 27, 1879, Provo.

(Joseph, Hyrum, Marily Emily, and Franklin H. all born in Salt Lake City.)

massacre the inhabitants of the city. At times I feared to lay my baby down lest they should slay me and leave it to suffer worse than death. About the first of February 1839, by the request of her husband, my sister was placed in a bed in a wagon and taken on a journey of about forty miles to visit him in the prison.

Her infant son, Joseph Fielding Smith, being about eleven weeks old. I had to accompany her, my own baby being eight months old. The weather being extremely cold, we suffered much on the journey. We arrived at the prison in the evening and were admitted and the door closed upon us. A night never to be forgotten. A sleepless night. I nursed the darling babies and in the morning we prepared to start for home with my afflicted sister. As long as memory lasts will there remain in my recollection the creaking hinges of the door which closed upon the noblest men on earth. Who can imagine our feelings as we traveled homeward. But would I see the honor bestowed upon me for being locked up in jail with such noble characters for gold? No! No!

Shortly after our return to Far West, we had to leave our cold unfurnished house and start in lumber wagons for Illinois. My sister again being placed in a bed in her afflicted state. This was about the middle of February. The weather was extremely cold and I still had the care of both babies. We arrived at Quincy about the end of the month of February. My husband had engaged a room for our accommodation, but my sister being obliged to be with me on account of her baby, the whole of Brother Hyrum's family of ten remained with us until April. Then I went along to Commerce leaving my husband in Quincy. He followed in a few weeks and was employed by Joseph Smith as his private secretary which office he held until his death which took place August 27, 1841. I was then left a widow with a feeble child, my little girl. With diligence and economy and the helping of the Lord, our wants were supplied, but to me it was a lonesome life to be deprived of my husband, whose like could rarely be found. I believe all who knew him would agree with me in saying that his meekness and humility and integrity could not be easily excelled, if equalled. He labored diligently for Brother Joseph and the Church unto the end of his life without asking for salary. In this I aided him as far as possible by keeping boarders. Before his death, he entered into partnership with Don C. Smith in editing the Times and Seasons. Being deprived of my husband's society caused me to mourn so deeply that my health was impaired very much. On the 11th of August, 1843, I was called by direct revelation to enter into a state of plural marriage with Hyrum Smith, the Patriarch. This subject when first communicated to me, tried me to the very core. All my former traditions and every natural feeling of my heart rose in opposition to this principle, but, I was convinced that it was appointed by Him who is too wise to err, and too good to be unkind. Soon after my marriage, I became an inmate with my sister in the house of Hyrum Smith, where I remained until his death, sharing with my sister the care of his numerous family. I had from the time I moved to his house been a scribe in recording patriarchal blessings.

At one time after seeking diligently to know from the Lord if there was anything I could do for the building up of the Kingdom of God, a most pleasant sensation came over me. . .with the following words, "Try to get the sisters to subscribe one cent per week for the purpose of buying nails and glass for the temple." I went immediately to Brother Joseph and told him what seemed to be the whisperings of the spirit of the still small voice to me. Joseph told me to go ahead and the Lord would help me. I then mentioned it to Brother Hyrum who was much pleased and did all in his power to encourage and help, by speaking to the sisters in private and public, promising them they would receive their blessings in the Temple. All who subscribed the one cent per week should have their names recorded in the book of the law of the Lord. I, assisted by my sister, took down and kept a record of all their names and notwithstanding the poverty of the community, we had collected from the sisters by the time the committee were ready for the glass and nails in the treasury \$500.00 which they gladly received just in time of need. Perhaps I should here mention while the mobs were threatening to rob and massacre the inhabitants of Nauvoo, we hid up the box containing the money in a pile of brick which Hyrum had intended for building, had his life been spared.

The foregoing sentence brings to my mind a picture which begs description: An affectionate husband, loving father, a faithful friend, a warm-hearted benefactor being torn from wives and children, friends and dependents. The family at the time of his death numbered twenty, never to see their faces more, and we never to see his, but a mangled bleeding corpse. Perhaps my feelings can be better imagined than described, left again without any human protector with a feeble child. I remained with my sister until the Temple was finished so far that the ordinances of the Holy Priesthood could be administered. When I was called by President Young to take up my abode there, to assist in the female department, which I did laboring night and day keeping my child with me. My beloved friend, Mother Granger, staying there also. On my return home, I commenced making preparations for the journey west. I remained at Nauvoo until September, when with my sister and family crossed the Mississippi River a day or two before the mob commenced firing on the city. I traveled to Winter Quarters where I remained until the following June. When I arrived in the Valley of the Great Salt Lake in 16 weeks. I shared with the saints the privations, eating thistle roots, fighting crickets, and grasshoppers, but, I do not remember of having uttered one murmur of complaint. The blessings of the Lord have attended me and crowned my labors with success, so that I have been able to assist in emigrating the poor saints as well as contributing for the poor here, in the building up of Temples, etc., etc. and I would not now give up my religion for all the gold in America. I know I have not cunningly devised fables. I know that if I had not embraced the Gospel as revealed by Joseph Smith, the Prophet, in these last days and endeavored to live up to the requirements of the law of God, I could never be permitted to dwell in the presence of the Lord in His Celestial Kingdom. I am now in my 74th year and have written this sketch without spectacles, mostly

by lamplight. It is designed for my oldest female descendant; if such should be living at the time this letter should be brought forth. If no such individual can be found, I design it to be handed to the eldest female descendant of Martha Ann Smith Harris (my sister's daughter, daughter of Hyrum and Mary Fielding Smith). And now may to the receiver Blessings of God the Eternal Father rest down upon all the kindred that they may bring forth fruits of righteousness and be prepared to meet with those who have died in the faith of the Gospel. I hope this sketch will prove a blessing when I and my much esteemed friend, Sarah Kimball, are enjoying a state of Glory in the Heaven of Rest. Finish your work and come to me.

Yours Affectionately,

Mercy Rachel Fielding Thompson (Smith)

Hyrum

The Lord has called thee by that name, and by that name he has blessed thee. Thou hast borne the burden and heat of the day; thou hast toiled hard and labored much for the good of thy father's family: Thou hast been a stay many times to them and by thy diligence they have often been sustained. Thou hast loved thy father's family with a pure love, and has greatly desired their salvation. Thou hast always stood by thy father and reached forth the helping hand to lift him up when he was in affliction. . . . Thou hast never forsaken him, nor laughed him to scorn. For all these kindnesses the Lord my God will bless thee. I now ask my heavenly Father, in the name of Jesus Christ, to bless thee with the same blessing with which Jacob blessed his son Joseph; for thou art his true descendant and thy posterity shall be numbered with the house of Ephraim. . . . Thou shalt be blessed with the good things of this earth in rich abundance: The Lord will multiply his choice blessings upon thee and thy seed after thee, and thou, with them, shalt have an inheritance in Zion. And they shall possess it from generation to generation, and thy name shall never be blotted out from among the just, for the righteous shall rise up, and also thy children after thee, and say thy memory is just, that thou wert a just man and perfect in thy day. Thy name is written in heaven and thy salvation sealed on high.