

WILLIAM CHANDLER PARKINSON
Husband of Ellen Elvira (Nellie) Nash
and Louisa Benson

William, the son of Samuel Rose Parkinson and Arabella Ann Chandler, was born August 2, 1855, in Kaysville, Davis County, Utah. There were four boys and three girls in the family, himself having a twin sister, Charlotte. In the spring of 1860 the family moved to Franklin, Oneida County, Idaho, where William went to school and worked on the farm and in the canyons. When he was 16 he helped his father in their small store, and even became a "Minute Man" to help guard the people against the Indians.

William attended Brigham Young College in Logan for two winters and went to school in Ogden for one winter. He gained experience in merchandising while working in Wallace Foulger's store in Ogden. In the fall of 1875 he was hired to manage the cooperative store in Franklin, Idaho, where he stayed for 1-1/2 years. He then worked on the Logan Temple and then helped his father furnish lumber for ZCMI and the Assembly Hall in Salt Lake City. He served as Justice of the Peace for two years and four years as County Treasurer. In 1882 he was a contractor in the building of the Preston and Cub River Canal. He served as a member of the Board of Education in the Oneida Stake for about ten years. In 1884 he bought a small mercantile business in Preston, which grew into a large general merchandise establishment known as W.C. Parkinson and Company, retiring from management in 1899.

On December 12, 1878, William was married to Ellen Elvira (Nellie) Nash in the S.L. Endowment House by Daniel H. Wells. They had 11 children, five boys and six girls, three dying in infancy. (Mary, Lillian, Nellie, Irene, Ray, William, Willie, Waldo, Frank, Bartlett, and Eda) He took a second wife, Louisa Benson, on February 11, 1887, the ceremony being performed in the Logan Temple by Marriner W. Merrill. They had ten children, two boys and eight girls. (Louisa, Marie, Charlotte, Clara, George, Adeline, Wilbur, Carmen, Evelyn, and Wanda) At the time of their marriage, William was Louisa's bishop, and her father, George Taft Benson, was his counselor. The story is told that when they were settling tithing, Brother Benson announced that his tenth child had been born, and Bishop Parkinson said, "It is time you turned one in for tithing. I'll take the oldest one." (Louisa)

William Parkinson served as a home missionary in Cache Stake for about three years and was a counselor in the first Young Men's MIA organized in Franklin, Idaho. He was also the first fulltime missionary to be called from Franklin and served in England from 1880 to 1882. In 1884, Moses Thatcher ordained him as bishop of the Preston Ward, with John Larson and George Taft Benson as his counselors. He served faithfully in this position for about 14 years. During these years as bishop, a townsite was located and surveyed and a new meeting house built for the church; he helped purchase a ten-acre public square, a tithing lot, a meeting house lot, a burial ground and a 40-acre missionary farm; three district school houses, the Oneida Stake Academy, and the Mink Creek Canal were erected or partly constructed. The ward grew from about 30 families to three wards being organized from it.

As a missionary, he went Oregon, Washington, and California in 1896 and again in 1898 with his brothers Frank and Samuel. In August 1898 William was set apart as President of the Pocatello Stake by Apostle Heber J. Grant, necessitating his selling his home in Preston. Nearly three years later, he was called to serve as President of the Hyrum Stake, which position he held for 19 years (until 1920). He was one of the Conference speakers in the S.L. Tabernacle in April 1917.

Although William's church and business responsibilities kept him away from home a great deal of the time, his influence and love were strongly felt by his children. He was always kind and gentle, and spent wonderful evenings at home with his family singing around the piano, popping corn, eating apples, and making candy. Often the children would take turns standing behind his leather chair combing his hair while he read his newspaper. He had a great sense of humor and always had a story to tell. He was refined, affectionate and modest, maintaining a reputation of integrity and faithfulness among his brethren.

William Parkinson died in Salt Lake City, Utah, after a short illness, on November 17, 1929, at the age of 74. An excerpt from the testimony he left for his posterity is as follows:

I solemnly declare unto you that Jesus Christ is the very son of God, that He was born of the Virgin Mary, the only begotten in the flesh and the first born in the spirit. . . . I do solemnly testify that God has again restored through the instrumentality of Joseph Smith, the everlasting Gospel with all its gifts, keys, powers, and authorities. . . . And again I bear record that God revealed through the Prophet Joseph Smith the doctrine of the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage including the plurality of wives, and that in order to attain the highest degree of glory in the Celestial Kingdom of God, unto the fullness of glory in His presence, we must yield obedience to this law. In harmony with this injunction I married my two wives who have born children to me under this New and Everlasting Covenant, by which we are held together for time and all eternity, and our children born heirs to the Celestial Kingdom of God, and to which, if they are obedient to the commandments of God, they may attain, and thereby enjoy the presence of their parents, and inherit kingdoms and dominions throughout eternity.