

Development in Early Mormonism

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**Sandy, Utah
2023**

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Note: Page numbers and footnotes of previous publications are continuous.

Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

1. Mormonism. 2. Mormon Church-History-19th Century. 3. Comparative Religions. 4. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. 5. Joseph Smith, 1805-1844. 6. Book of Mormon. 7. Book of Commandments. 8. Doctrine and Covenants. 9. Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible. 10. Book of Abraham. 11. Council of Fifty.

Also, by H. Michael Marquardt

The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers

Inventing Mormonism: Tradition and the Historical Record (co-authored with Wesley P. Walters)

The Joseph Smith Revelations: Text and Commentary

The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844

The Four Gospels According to Joseph Smith

Early Patriarchal Blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Later Patriarchal Blessings of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

Lost Apostles: Forgotten Members of Mormonism's Original Quorum of Twelve (co-authored with William Shepard)

Introduction: Culture and History of the Mormon Movement

The culture setting of the early years of the Mormon movement was influenced within the America of the nineteenth century. This includes knowing what was occurring one hundred seventy-five years ago. What were the political, social, economic and religious environment that was a concern for most Americans? America was a new nation that was making history in its own way. One important turning point was the War of 1812. Growth, industrialization and westward expansion was moving forward.

Religion and church membership was declining. Many states had their own established religions. With the freedom of religion came numerous religious movements and churches. Some wanted to be considered as being the New Testament church. Revivals became a way to excite individuals to look at their standing with the Divine. They were looking for the long-promised millennium and many joined the local churches in their vicinity.

Topics of discussion included Sabbath Day observance, the threat of Roman Catholicism and objections to secret societies. Also, there was interest in dietary reforms on the use of liquor, tea, coffee, tobacco and use of wholesome food. Transportation methods were changing. Slavery was discussed by both sides of the issue.

It was important for families to work together and provide basic needs for their survival. The barter system was common. Education was becoming important. The role of women was essential to family life but was limited in many ways.

With the publication of the Book of Mormon there was a sense of America being a chosen land and with it a mission to the American Indians who were considered Israelites. A central focus was to assist the natives in understanding their lost heritage and unite with those who believed the book.

Studying history is not about proving or disproving spiritual experiences. Apologetic use of history is not the way to understand the past. It should be done away. History does not dictate faith or belief. Like the Bible, restoration history is a guide and not something you are forced to believe.

A study of events should serve to understand and appreciate what occurred previously as it can change your perception. The ongoing study includes correction when there is new information.

Histories written by churches include stories of faith and of human leaders who said and did things that do not seem correct from our perspective and culture. We need to understand and not put in our judgment which may be incorrect upon what others did or said. Admitting past mistakes is helpful to our community. We can have different conclusions as we study history.

One reason why a study of Mormonism is interesting is because there were many records kept, also publications that reported what had occurred. Newspapers also told stories both good and bad. Nothing needs to be off limits in our quest to obtain historical knowledge. While we don't have a record of all events, we have enough to make solid contributions in the field of history.

The story of the Latter Day Saint movement has changed over time. Different elements were solidified by early church members. Telling the story in a new way should assist believers and non-believers to be on the same page and alleviate arguments. We can agree to disagree and have respect for each other.

What follows tries to include small and large changes based upon historical records. This study will show that the stories we were told has a history all by itself. It is ok to have an alternative view of restoration events. Religious history includes convictions which may or not be based upon facts. Usually, individuals do not change their thinking unless presented with documentation, and that does not guarantee any change.

What is important is not so much which individuals had the most influence or actually made the redactions, but that they were made. We can learn from history and appreciate what it tells us about the past. It is good to know that we are ever learning and do not need to feel embarrassed by learning new facts.

In November 1831 Sidney Rigdon made grammatical changes in the manuscript record Book of Commandments and Revelations (BCR) to many revelations before their publication in *The Evening and the Morning Star* and Book of Commandments. Some of these were used and some not. There were also texts that were omitted when printing the Book of Commandments. The omitted documents included the Canadian copyright revelation, LDS D&C 17, 51, 57 and 74.

The Book of Commandments modifications included two revelations that were given to Oliver Cowdery. They were altered in the BCR for the Book of Commandments. Cowdery was told he had "another gift which is the gift of working with the sprout," which was the divining rod he possessed. The word "sprout" was changed to "rod." Instructions given to preach to the Lamanites (Native Americans) said the city of the New Jerusalem would be built "among the Lamanites." The word "among" was omitted by being crossed through and "on the borders by" added above the line. This was modified after the failed mission to the Lamanites. The above revelations were changed early in the process of publication.

By January 1835 what had been voted on at the first church conference in June 1830, the Articles and Covenants of the church, was added to. This included church titles such as bishop, high priests, high counselors and president of the high priesthood. Also, the words that an angel told Joseph Smith concerning the sacrament of bread and wine were amended. What Joseph Smith Jr. was told in September 1830 was expanded in 1835 to include names of biblical personages some of which were said to have appeared to Smith and Oliver Cowdery. Additional words were incorporated without regard to the historical circumstance.

This step was made in 1835 starting with the reprint of the *Evening and Morning Star* and the preparation of various texts for the Doctrine and Covenants, which could be considered the first church handbook of instructions.

The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants text represents an important departure from the early text of February 9, 1831, which stressed that one was to "consecrate all thy property, that which thou hath unto me with a covenant & a deed which cannot be broken." The altered portion weakened the requirement to demand only that one "consecrate of thy properties," leaving the percentage--all or part--ambiguous. In fact, it seemed to imply that the amount might be a matter of personal preference.

By May 1833 additional historical and theological changes were being considered within the leadership of the church. Some issues included changing the requirements of the law of consecration to give all to the bishop. On May 2 Joseph Smith wrote a letter explaining the law noting that if an individual was no longer in the church, he could keep his inheritance. It appears that changing conditions in the church brought about a gradual development in the handling of funds. But rather than seek a new revelation, the old one was reinterpreted. So, by the end of

1834 Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery stated that they were willing to give a tenth. This covenant was made on November 29, 1834 and recorded in Smith's journal.

In February 1834 a church high council was established. The minutes were read, revised and approved. Church leaders in May 1834 changed the revealed name of the church and by extension the location of where the church was established. They created an image that was at variance with known events. On the idea that church organization was held at Fayette, New York, the problem is that neither a meeting nor baptisms took place at that location on April 6, 1830. This continued with the textual revisions incorporated into what was published as the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835.

The revision of the revelations was only the start of a revamp of the more important story regarding how Joseph Smith came into possession of the gold plates which he produced as the Book of Mormon. Early missionaries heard about an angel revealing the location of a record in a hill not too far from the Smith home. Joseph Smith talked about his experience and had it recorded in 1832. Later Oliver Cowdery in a series of published letters expanded in some respects the message of the angel. Finally with an official history Joseph Smith described the events in 1838, copied in 1839 as the Manuscript History. This was the projection of what Smith wanted to convey to church members and the general public.

If we go to earlier texts of the revelations and earlier stories heard prior to 1834, we can determine that the story of the discovery of gold plates had different elements than the more detailed telling in the Manuscript History. The Manuscript History is a faith history. As such it says the meeting of April 6, 1830 was held at Mr. Peter Whitmer's home in Fayette, New York and implies that the baptisms were in that area for Joseph Smith Sr. The history mentions that Oliver Cowdery was ordained an elder in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This is the name of the church at the time the history was recorded. But the baptism of Joseph Smith Sr. was in Manchester, New York. Martin Harris was baptized there also. If we look at the history, we can know the general ideas where events took place. The Manuscript History uses the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants as the base text of the revelations. We know that some of the revelations have been change, as has the history.

The handwritten manuscript that is the basis of Joseph Smith-History in the Pearl of Great Price was prepared starting in 1838. Joseph Smith was a source of many of the events covered. The part starting with the birth of Joseph Smith in 1805 to about June 1828, which would include verses 1-65, would have been recorded in 1838, but the manuscript is not preserved. There was an early draft produced by James Mulholland in 1839 covering the period May 1829 to September 1830. The 1838 portion and the draft were copied and recorded in 1839 by Mulholland. It is contained in a record book known as Manuscript History Book A-1. This part of the history was published in 1842 in the *Times and Seasons* at Nauvoo, Illinois. It can also be found in the published *History of the Church*, volume 1, pages 1-117, covering 1805 to September 1830. The handwritten Manuscript History can be viewed on the Joseph Smith Papers web site.

The idea of this being the latter days, like the name adopted in 1834, the Church of the Latter Day Saints, evidently came from the New Testament. Joseph Smith had an interest in Old Testament priesthood and to him this fit his model. Priesthood could control and give organization to his followers. The idea of the Melchizedek priesthood came out of his Bible revision and then into practice in early June 1831. It was then that elders received an ordination to the high priesthood, after the order of Melchizedek, which was the same as the office of high

priest. This was the beginning of the development of priesthood structure in the Latter Day Saint community.

Besides testimony meetings, the church offered members patriarchal blessings given by ordained patriarchs. Joseph Smith Senior was probably ordained in December 1834. He gave blessings to family members and church members. Usually, a blessing would include what tribe of ancient Israel the individual either came through or would receive their blessing. The blessings would include future prospects and promises of eternal life and resurrection. A copy of the handwritten blessing would be given to the individual and could be recorded in a patriarchal blessing book.

Joseph Smith's ideas on women were patriarchal which also came from the Old Testament. People wanted a prophet to tell them what to do. One thing led to another. John C. Bennett was an example of a man who had an interest in women and was a friend of Smith. If Smith told a woman that he received a revelation that the order of marriage would be extended like in Old Testament times, and asked her to pray and ask God if it was right, he would have a good percentage that the woman would accept his instructions.

Smith evidently thought that certain teachings and practices could be contained by saying that they should be secret to the believer. He could then deny any practice or teaching to those outside the church and also to the church itself. A big problem was his lawful wife, Emma. He had to figure a way to have women keep his involvement in plural marriage private. He organized the Nauvoo Relief Society and told them that they should be as Masons and learn to keep secrets. The Nauvoo Masonic Lodge was for men kept secrets. His anointed quorum was a priesthood organization to keep their rites secret. Priesthood meant to keep their sacred teachings from others. In this way his followers both men and women were under the obligation of obedience.

When establishing plural marriage Joseph Smith, church leader and prophet, required deception. This created tensions within his family, his close associates, the general church membership, and with civic governments both local and abroad. It was saying one thing, practicing another in secret and denying it.

How one reacts to learning new information is always an individual choice. Most persons would just like to be told in the best possible way what has occurred. As each branch of the Latter Day movement works out their expression of faith it becomes harder to retain adults and youth. Is there anything to the gospel message besides quoting outdated facts? As others have said, bring on the truth because nothing is of higher value.

Historical Setting of Mormonism in Manchester, Ontario County, New York¹

Introduction

This study will examine the historical events of the Joseph Smith Sr. family residence in the township of Manchester, New York. It will tell about the Smith family and their experiences while residing there. It includes the earliest stories as heard by their neighbors. Another objective is to present documentation relating to the commencement of what became a new religious movement. It will show that Manchester is where the formal organization of the early church commenced.

Discussions about Native Americans who lived in what became Ontario County were held in the Smith home. Lucy Mack Smith, mother and chronicler of this family, is the source for the report of young Joseph Smith Jr. engaging the family in these tales. From what Lucy tells us in her history, these stories and various discussions about the prospect of obtaining a record were mentioned before her son Alvin died in November 1823. The final outcome was the publication in 1830 of a large religious volume titled the Book of Mormon. The present study contains the documents, letters, and revelations produced in Manchester.

Palmyra, New York

After living in the state of Vermont, Joseph Smith Sr. (1771–1840) decided that it was time to relocate west to Palmyra, New York,² the town was in Ontario County. He left prior to his family making the trip. The Smith family included his wife Lucy (1775–1856) and eight children, from ages eighteen years to about nine months. Their names with dates of birth and death years were: Alvin (1798–1823), Hyrum (1800–1844), Sophronia (1803–76), Joseph Jr. (1805–44), Samuel Harrison (1808–44), William (1811–93), Catherine (1813–1900), and Don Carlos (1816–41). The family made the journey by sled in early 1817 because it was easier than making a journey with the roads wet and muddy.

The Smith family lived on Main Street in Palmyra for the next few years. An important record kept at the time was the Palmyra Highway Tax Record. The town held its annual meeting on the first Tuesday in April. It is evident from the listing of Road District 26 that the west end of Main Street was where the family resided from April 1817 through April 1819. The oldest son, Alvin, remained in the town as he is listed for April 1820.³ The record of April 1821 indicates that the family was living at the south end of Palmyra Township. The last daughter was born in Palmyra Township on July 18, 1821, and named after her mother Lucy (1821–82).

¹ First published in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 35 (Fall/Winter 2015).

² Bonnie J. Hays, *Images of America: Palmyra* (Charleston, SC: Arcadia Publishing, printed in Great Britain, 2004).

³ Additional background can be found in H. Michael Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816–1844*, 2nd ed. (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2013), 1–7.

Joseph Sr. and Alvin are also listed for April 1822. As will be explained, the Smiths moved out of Palmyra Township between June 1822 and July 1823.

Land in Farmington, New York

Joseph Smith Sr. and his oldest son Alvin articulated for ninety-nine-and-one-half acres (rounded to one hundred acres) in the town of Farmington, Ontario County, out of three hundred acres of lot 1. Lucy Mack Smith, wife of Joseph Smith Sr., says in her memoir, “My Husband and 2 oldest sons set themselves about raising the means of paying for 100 Acres of land for which Mr Smith contracted and which was then in the hands of a land agent. Mr [blank] In one years time we made nearly all of the first payment The ~~Agent~~ Agent advised [*sic*] us to build a log house on the land and commence clearing it we did so. It was not long till we had 30 acers ready for cultivation.”⁴

It is known that Joseph Sr. and Alvin articulated for their land from a November 1825 deed for land south of the Smith property.⁵ The land agent that Lucy did not remember was Zachariah Seymour, who was appointed on July 14, 1820, and died July 2, 1822. The Smiths could not complete their final payment to the land agent since he had passed away.

Because the articling document for the land has not been located, it is unknown of the exact details of the arrangements for payments. A printed Articles of Agreement would include the date of purchase, the cost per acre, space for recording payments and, in some cases, a stipulation to erect a building, clear land for cultivation within one year and to pay all taxes and assessments. The approximate timing of the signing can be determined from the 1820 United States census for Farmington (enumerated between August 7, 1820 and February 5, 1821) that lists the Joseph Smith family, even though they were still residing in Palmyra.

In 1821 Farmington was divided to create a new township named Burt, renamed Manchester in April 1822. It appears that the Smith family built their log house, cleared land for planting and made other improvements, leaving their Palmyra residence sometime between June 1822 and July 1823. The one hundred acres of lot 1 was located in the northwest corner of Manchester Township. Joseph Sr.’s assessment for July 24, 1823, was \$300 more than the previous year which indicated the work already completed on their new Manchester farm. Palmyra village was where the Smiths did the majority of their business and received letters. In 1823 a newly formed county was formed, placing Palmyra into Wayne County.

⁴ Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 318–19, cited hereafter as *Lucy’s Book*. This work includes a textual history, the manuscript draft of 1844–45 and a comparison of the final revised manuscript, completed in 1845, with the 1853 printing. Manuscripts in Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah (cited hereafter as LDS Church History Library).

⁵ Deed recorded in Deed Liber 44:219–21, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

Log Home Location

Lucy Smith stated that the family built a log home on their hundred-acre lot. The precise location is not known. In 1830 Hyrum Smith was taxed for fifteen acres on lot 1. How this relates to Roswell Nichols (married to Mary Durfee, daughter of Lemuel Durfee Sr.) being taxed for one hundred acres on the same lot the record does not indicate. The Smith family could have been working on another portion of the lot. Their log house was where a number of men performed scribal work in making a copy of the original manuscript for the printer to set type for the forthcoming Book of Mormon. Visitors to the Smith log home described their residence as being in Manchester. In addition, letters dated 1829 and revelations proclaimed in 1830 give the location as Manchester and were written in the Smith log home.

Stone Found in a Well on the Chase farm

The Chase family lived in the northern part of the township of Manchester, east of the Smith farm. The parents were Phebe Mason Chase (1772–1854) and Clark Chase (1770–1821). They had ten children. The children enumerated in the 1820 census probably included Mason Chase (1795–?), Willard Chase (1798–1871), Sarah (Sally) Chase (1800–1880), and Edmund Chase (1803–93). What may not be known is that it was on the Chase farm where Joseph Smith Jr. borrowed a peep-stone from Willard Chase who stated:

In the year 1822, I was engaged in digging a well. I employed Alvin and Joseph Smith to assist me; the latter of whom is now known as the Mormon prophet. After digging about twenty feet below the surface of the earth, we discovered a singularly appearing stone, which excited my curiosity. I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat. It has been said by Smith, that he brought the stone from the well; but this is false. There was no one in the well but myself. The next morning he came to me, and wished to obtain the stone, alledging that he could see in it; but I told him I did not wish to part with it on account of its being a curiosity, but would lend it. After obtaining the stone, he began to publish abroad what wonders he could discover by looking in it, and made so much disturbance among the credulous part of [the] community, that I ordered the stone to be returned to me again. He had it in his possession about two years.⁶

Death of Alvin Smith

Lucy Smith mentions “when the month of November 1822 [*sic*; 1823] arrived the House was raised and all the Materials procured for completing the building.” Alvin wanted a frame home for his mother and father to live in. But on November 15, 1823, Alvin took sick. Though doctors came to attend him the sickness worsened. He called his siblings together and gave his

⁶ Affidavit of Willard Chase, Manchester, Ontario County, New York, before Justice of the Peace, Frederick Smith, December 11, 1833, in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville [OH]: Printed and Published by the Author, 1834), 240–41, emphasis omitted.

dying council. He told his brother Hyrum, “I now want you to go on and finish the House” and to Joseph Jr., “do everything that lays in your power to obtain the records.” On November 19 Alvin died.⁷

There was a rumor in September 1824 that Alvin’s grave had been opened, evidently right after his burial in 1823. So Joseph Sr. and some associates went to the place where he was buried, dug up the body and found that the rumor was false. He placed the following announcement in Palmyra’s *Wayne Sentinel*:

To the Public. Whereas reports have been industriously put in circulation, that my son *Alvin* had been removed from the place of his interment and dissected, which reports, every person possessed of human sensibility must know, are peculiarly calculated to harrow up the mind of a parent and deeply wound the feelings of relations—therefore, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of such reports, I, with some of my neighbors, this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body which had not been disturbed.

This method is taken for the purpose of satisfying the minds of those who may have heard the report, and of informing those who have put it in circulation, that it is earnestly requested they would desist therefrom; and that it is believed by some, that they have been stimulated more by a desire to injure the reputation of certain persons than a philanthropy for the peace and welfare of myself and friends. JOSEPH SMITH.⁸

After Alvin’s death work slowly continued on the frame house. A neighbor, Russell Stoddard (1789–1873), worked on the home and had to bring suit against Joseph Sr. for payment of his labor and the lumber he provided. Stoddard went before Peter Mitchell, Justice of the Peace in Manchester, with his complaint of nonpayment of \$66.59. Justice Mitchell heard the case on February 18, 1825. Joseph Sr. confessed owing Russell the money but he pled that he did not intend to defraud any creditor. The transcript of the judgment against Joseph Smith Sr. was sent to the Common Pleas in Canandaigua.⁹

Ontario Justice Court

Russell Stoddard } Before Peter Mitchell Esq one

vs } of the Justices of the peace in

Joseph Smith } & for the County of Ontario

Ontario County ss.

⁷ Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 349–52.

⁸ “To the Public,” *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, New York) 2, no. 1 (September 29, 1824): 3, emphasis retained. The advertisement is dated September 25, 1824. The notice also appeared in the issues of October 6, 13, 20, 27 and November 3, 1824. The placement in the local newspaper was not mentioned in Lucy Smith’s family history.

⁹ “1825 Common Pleas Transcripts,” AM21-101, Box No. 19302, Ontario County Records Center and Archives.

Joseph Smith the said defendant in this cause being duly sworn saith that he is honestly & justly indebted to the plaintiff in the above suit in the sum of sixty six dollars & fifty nine cents money of account of the United States it being for work & labour & lumber which the said plaintiff did for me in building a dwelling house which said sum is over & above all just demands which he the said defendant hath against Russell Stoddard the said plaintiff & that the confession of judgment about to be made by him the said defendant for the sum of sixty six dollars & fifty nine cents is not to be made for the purpose of defrauding any creditor.

Joseph Smith

Sworn before me this
18th day of February 1825
Peter Mitchell J. P.

Included in the transcript is a copy of another document which indicated, like the above, that the elder Smith admitted owing Stoddard for services rendered the Smith family:

Russell Stoddard } Before Peter Mitchell Esq
vs } one of the Justices of the
Joseph Smith } peace in & for the County of
} Ontario

I Joseph Smith the defendant in the above cause do hereby confess that I am honestly & justly indebted to Russell Stoddard the above named plaintiff in the sum of sixty six dollars & fifty nine cents money of account of the United States & do hereby authorize you the said Justice to enter judgment against me the said defendant in favour of Russell Stoddard the said plaintiff for the same

Given under my hand this 18th day of Feb 1825 Joseph Smith

Russell Stoddard } Peter Mitchell Esq. one of the Justices
vs } of the peace in & for the County
Joseph Smith } of Ontario
Ontario County ss

By virtue of the above authorization of Joseph Smith the defendant in this suit I do hereby enter judgment against him the said defendant in favour of Russell Stoddard the above named plaintiff for sixty six dollars & fifty nine cents damages & twenty five cents costs –

Given under my hand this 18th day of Feb. 1825 Peter Mitchell J. P.

I certify the foregoing to be a true transcript of the proceedings in my court in the case of a judgment by confession acknowledged by Joseph Smith in favour of Russell Stoddard –

Given under my hand this 18th day of Feb. 1825 - Peter Mitchell J. P.

Fees for this transcript 25 cents -

The outside of the transcript contains:

Russell Stoddard
vs
Joseph Smith
Transcript
Execution issued 20th
May 1825
Filed 19th February 1825.

What financial arrangement entered into by Joseph Sr. to pay Russell Stoddard is not known. Their house may not have been completely finished. This does show that Joseph Sr. acknowledged his debt and was willing to pay it.¹⁰ The Smiths lost their land in December 1825 as discussed below.

Native Americans in the Region

The area of the township of Manchester was occupied by Native Americans prior to any settlement of land holders. Conflicting claims of what land was owned by which different states and treaties made with tribes were settled by the time of the Smith family's arrival in Ontario County.¹¹ There were a variety of artifacts scattered above and below the ground. One local author wrote:

The only mementos we have of the red man's occupancy in this region are numerous flint arrow heads, plowed up here and there in the fields, remains of a number of forts, specimens of uniquely decorated pottery, pipe-bowls, pots of red ochre, strings of wampum— from which we may read that the original inhabitants lived by the chase, fought in deadly conflict one with another, had tasted of the fruit of good and evil that grows on the tobacco stem, had the common human weakness for adornment and sought to tone down their high cheek bones and ornament the coppery sheen of their complexions by adventitious means, had food to store and wealth to barter.¹²

Lucy recalled that Joseph Jr. recounted during his teenage years the religion and warfare of the natives as though he had lived with them:

¹⁰ The judgment of \$66.59 and 25 cents cost of transcript was "Satisfied" and entered April 19, 1826. Court Records, 1821–1852, Disposition of Court Cases, Box AMO1-173, Ontario County Records Center and Archives. Special thanks to Don Enders for a copy of this document.

¹¹ James H. Hotchkiss, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York, and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in that Section* (New York: Published by M. W. Dodd, 1848), 1–12.

¹² Charles F. Milliken, *Ontario County, New York and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911), 2.

In the course of our evening conversations Joseph would give us some of the most amusing recitals which could be imagined he would de[s]cribe the ancient inhabitants of this continent their dress thier man[n]er of traveling the animals which they rode The cities that were built by them the structure of their buildings with every particular of their mode of warfare [and] their religious worship as particularly as though he had Spent his life with them.¹³

Revival includes Manchester

There was a religious revival or awaking in the Palmyra area that included Manchester during the fall of 1824 and early 1825. The local newspaper reprinted a Presbyterian periodical that chronicled the events: “More than two hundred souls have become the hopeful subjects of divine grace in Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Phelps, Lyons, and Ontario, since the late revival commenced.”¹⁴ These figures undoubtedly reflect Presbyterian gains. A note in the same issue of the Palmyra paper adds this balancing information: “It may be added, that in Palmyra and Macedon, including Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, more than 400 have already testified that the Lord is good. The work is still progressing. In the neighboring towns, the number is great and fast increasing.”¹⁵ James Hotchkin wrote about the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra at this time, “Another copious shower of grace passed over this region in 1824, under the labors of Mr. [Benjamin] Stockton, and a large number were gathered into the church, some of whom are now pillars in Christ’s house.”¹⁶

Joseph Smith Jr. and Treasure Digging

The possibility of finding buried treasure fascinated many in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America. Reports of searching for such riches were widespread in the Palmyra area,¹⁷ and extant accounts show that treasure was generally sought through supernatural means. Locations for buried wealth and lost Spanish mines were sometimes claimed through dreams. Treasures could also be sought by using divining rods, often made from “witch hazel,” or by looking in special stones or crystals. Sometimes when a stone was used, the person would place a stone in a hat and then conjure the guardian treasure spirit. After finding a spot where the cache was supposedly hidden, the seekers would draw a magic circle on the ground

¹³ Lucy Mack Smith History, 1844–1845, LDS Church History Library; also in Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 345.

¹⁴ “Moral and Religious,” *Wayne Sentinel* 2, no. 23 (March 2, 1825): 4.

¹⁵ “Religious,” *Ibid.*, 3.

¹⁶ Hotchkin, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York*, 378.

¹⁷ Newspaper articles mention unnamed individuals who claimed to have found vast treasures. The *Orleans Advocate* published in Albion, New York, contains the following: “A few days since was discovered in this town, by the help of a mineral stone, (which becomes transparent when placed in a hat and the light excluded by the face of him who looks into it, provided he is fortune’s favorite,) a monstrous potash kettle in the bowels of old mother Earth, filled with the purest bullion.” Reprinted in “From the Orleans Advocate,” *Wayne Sentinel* 3, no. 14 (December 27, 1825): 2, and the *Livingston Register* (Geneseo, New York), December 28, 1825.

around the hidden treasure. Sometimes they would maintain absolute silence, but at other times they would recite magical charms or religious verses used as charms. Whatever the means, money-diggers claimed the need to overcome the guardian spirit who had enchanted the treasure; otherwise the treasure would slip back into the earth.

Willard Chase explained that the stone returned by Joseph Jr. was borrowed this time by Hyrum Smith with a promise to return it to Chase when requested. Chase wrote:

I believe, some time in 1825, Hiram Smith (brother of Joseph Smith) came to me, and wished to borrow the same stone, alledging that they wanted to accomplish some business of importance, which could not very well be done without the aid of the stone. I told him it was of no particular worth to me, but merely wished to keep it as a curiosity, and if he would pledge me his word and honor, that I should have it when called for, he might take it; which he did and took the stone. I thought I could rely on his word at this time, as he had made a profession of religion. But in this I was disappointed, for he disregarded both his word and honor.¹⁸

Joseph Capron (1791–1874), a neighbor living south of the Smith family on lot 1, who had met Joseph Smith Sr. in 1827, also reported on the use of the stone:

The family of Smiths held Joseph Jr. in high estimation on account of some supernatural power, which he was supposed to possess. This power he pretended to have received through the medium of a stone of peculiar quality. The stone was placed in a hat, in such a manner as to exclude all light, except that which emanated from the stone itself. This light of the stone, he pretended, enabled him to see any thing he wished. Accordingly he discovered ghosts, infernal spirits, mountains of gold and silver, and many other invaluable treasures deposited in the earth. He would often tell his neighbors of his wonderful discoveries, and urge them to embark in the money digging business.¹⁹

An 1832 letter written at Canandaigua, New York, south of Manchester and the Ontario County seat of government, reported that Joseph Jr. “had been engaged for some time in company with several others of the same Character in digging for money ... and for a time were supported by a Mr Fish an illiterate man of some property.”²⁰ Mr. Fish is Abraham Fish (1773–1845) of Manchester, and was a neighbor of the Smith family. Abraham Fish was well acquainted with Joseph and his father. Fish lived south of the Smith land on lot 1. That Fish was illiterate is evidenced in the Nathan Pierce Docket Book when he signed his name with an “+” identified as “his mark.” A receipt dated March 10, 1827, received by the younger Joseph from

¹⁸ Affidavit of Willard Chase, December 11, 1833, in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 241.

¹⁹ Statement of Joseph Capron, Manchester, Ontario County, November 8, 1833, in *Ibid.*, 259. Capron died in Manchester and was buried in the Palmyra Cemetery.

²⁰ Retained copy of a letter from six leading citizens of Canandaigua, New York, January 1832, in answer to a query about Mormons from Rev. Ancil Beach, in the Walter Hubbell Collection, 1831–1833 Correspondence, Princeton University Libraries, Princeton, New Jersey, strikethrough words omitted. See Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 3:15.

the Thayer store in Palmyra reads: “Palmyra, 10th March 1827, Recd of Joseph Smith Jr Four dollars which is credited to the account of A. Fish” and signed J & L Thayer. Joel and Levi Thayer were the owners of the store.²¹

Another supporter in treasure-digging lore was Josiah Stowell Sr. (1770–1844) of Chenango County, New York. The treasure seekers also went into northern Pennsylvania where Isaac Hale (1763–1839) and his wife Elizabeth (1767–1842) lived. They boarded at his residence where Joseph Jr. met his future wife Emma (1804–79). On November 1, 1825, soon after their arrival in Harmony and in anticipation of their discoveries, Stowell’s treasure-digging company drew up “Articles of Agreement.” This agreement stipulated, “If anything of value should be obtained at a certain place in Pennsylvania near a Wm. Hale’s, supposed to be a valuable mine of either Gold or Silver and also to contain coined money and bars or ingots of Gold or Silver,” each member would receive a share, including a share to Oliver Harper’s widow. According to this agreement, Joseph Sr. and his son Joseph (who both signed the agreement) would receive “two elevenths of all the property that may be obtained.”²² Isaac Hale wrote about the money digging during this time:

[Joseph] Smith, and his father, with several other “money-diggers” boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine that they supposed had been opened and worked by the Spaniards, many years since. Young Smith gave the “money-diggers” great encouragement, at first, but when they had arrived in digging, to near the place where he had stated an immense treasure would be found—he said the enchantment was so powerful that he could not see. They then became discouraged, and soon after dispersed. This took place about the 17th of November, 1825; and one of the company gave me his note for \$12[.]68 for his board, which is still unpaid.²³

Smith’s Lose Land

Eventually a new agent, John Greenwood (1798–1887), was given power of attorney on May 17, 1824. The Smiths knew they needed to make their final payment in order to obtain the legal right to hold their one hundred acres of land. The trip to locate a mine in the fall of 1825 did not bring in the money they needed to pay off the land. So on December 20, 1825, Lemuel

²¹ Joseph Smith Collection, under Receipts, in LDS Church History Library.

²² “An Interesting Document,” *Daily Tribune* (Salt Lake City), April 23, 1880, 4 from the *Susquehanna Journal*, March 20, 1880. The original document is not extant. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 4:407–13.

²³ Affidavit of Isaac Hale, Harmony, Pennsylvania, before Justice of the Peace, Charles Dimon, March 20, 1834, in “Mormonism,” *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 (May 1, 1834): 1, original newspaper in the Susquehanna County Historical Society, Montrose, Pennsylvania. The testimonies from the *Register* were reprinted in *The New York Baptist Register* 11 (June 13, 1834): 68, original in Colgate University Archives. Also in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 263.

Durfee Sr. (1759–1829) purchased their farm²⁴ for \$1,135 and let them remain in the frame house and on the farm.

Joseph Jr. continued to work for Josiah Stowell and to attend school. He also worked with his peep-stone to find lost objects. On March 20, 1826, he was brought before Justice of the Peace Albert Neely (ca. 1798–1857) of Bainbridge, Chenango County, on a charge of disorderly conduct or being a “glass looker.” His docket book recorded the examination of Joseph Smith and witnesses, including Josiah Stowell:

Prisoner [Joseph Smith] examined: says that he came from the town of Palmyra, and had been at the house of Josiah Stowel[I] in Bainbridge most of time since; had small part of time been employed in looking for mines, but the major part had been employed by said Stowel[I] on his farm, and going to school. That he had a certain stone which he had occasionally looked at to determine where hidden treasures in the bowels of the earth were; that he professed to tell in this manner where gold mines were a distance under ground, and had looked for Mr. Stowel[I] several times, and had informed him where he could find these treasures, and Mr. Stowel[I] had been engaged in digging for them. That at Palmyra he pretended to tell by looking at this stone where coined money was buried in Pennsylvania, and while at Palmyra had frequently ascertained in that way where lost property was of various kinds; that he had occasionally been in the habit of looking through this stone to find lost property for three years, but of late had pretty much given it up on account of its injuring his health, especially his eyes, made them sore; that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.

Josiah Stowell Sr. testified:

[Stowell] says that prisoner [Joseph Smith] had been at his house something like five months; had been employed by him to work on farm part of time . . . that prisoner had looked for him sometimes; once to tell him about money buried in Bend Mountain in Pennsylvania, once for gold on Monument Hill, and once for a salt spring; and that he positively knew that the prisoner could tell, and did possess the art of seeing those valuable treasures through the medium of said stone²⁵

Justice Albert Neely considered Joseph Smith guilty and notified two other justices. No formal trial was held.

On November 2, 1826 Jerusha Barden (1805–37) married Hyrum Smith in Manchester. Emma Hale married Joseph Jr. in South Bainbridge, Chenango County, on January 18, 1827, returning with his wife to the Manchester farm. Sophronia Smith was married on December 30,

²⁴ Deed Liber 44:232–34, Ontario County Records Center and Archives.

²⁵ Charles Marshall, “The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City,” *Fraser’s Magazine* (London, England) 7 (February 1873): 229; reprinted in the *Eclectic Magazine* (New York) 17 (April 1873). Neely’s docket book is not extant.

1827 to Calvin W. Stoddard (1801–36). Hyrum and Jerusha's two daughters were both born in Manchester: September 16, 1827 for Lovina and June 27, 1829 for Mary.²⁶

Working for Lemuel Durfee Sr.

Samuel Harrison Smith worked for Lemuel Durfee Sr. in 1827, as recorded in one of Durfee's account books: "April the 16 day the year 1827 S. Harrison Smith Son of Joseph Smith began to Work for me by the month. is to Work 7 Months for the use of the place Where Said Joseph Smith Lives."²⁷ The Smith family lived in the frame home through the courtesy of Mr. Durfee for just over three years, January 1826 through March 1829. In a separate account book Durfee noted for 1827 the following:

Joseph [Sr.] and Hiram Smith Dr [debit] to three barrels of Cider at 9/ per barrel May the Last 1827 [9 shillings per barrel]
June the 26 day Joseph Smith Dr. to Veal hind Quarter 23 pound \$0.69 also one fore Quarter Wt. 22 pounds \$=55 55
august Credit by Joseph Smith by mo[w]ing three days & Joseph Smith Ju Jnr. two days mowing & Hiram Smith one day mowing even
Sept. first to two barrels of Cider racked of[f] to Joseph & Hiram Smiths at 9/ per barrel \$2=25

For the year 1828 Lemuel Durfee noted:

May the 13th Joseph [Sr.] & [Samuel] Harrison Smith Dr. [debit] to three barrels of Cider the Lique at \$3=38
June the 18 day the year 1828 Credit By Hiram & Har[r]ison Smiths a hoeing one Day a piece
June the 20 day Joseph & Harrison Smiths Dr. to the Lique of three barrels of Cider at 9/0 per barrel \$3=38
July 7 day Credit by J. Smith & Rockwell by hoeing three days
July 20 Jos. Smith & Harrison Cr. by Work binding Wheat one day of william and three days of Harrison Work
august 7 Credit <by> Rockwell to two days Mowing for me by Harrison Smith by three days a Mowing for me ²⁸

²⁶ "Records of Early Church Families," *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* (Salt Lake City) 26 (July 1935): 103.

²⁷ Lemuel Durfee Account Book 1815–1829, Ontario County Historical Society Museum and Research Library, Canandaigua, New York.

²⁸ Lemuel Durfee Account Book (1825–1829), King's Daughters Library, Palmyra, New York in 1973, original record currently not extant. Wesley P. Walters, Concerning the Lemuel Durfee Account Book, October 23, 1988. Angled brackets indicate writing above the line. This is a separate account book and should not be confused with a similar ledger cited in note 26.

Manchester, New York Story

The story of Joseph Smith Jr. receiving a visionary experience in September 1823, with instructions to visit a nearby hill about a mile away each year, was expressed outside the family as early as the fall of 1826. The final outcome regarding the visit to the hill occurred in the fall of 1827. At this time Joseph Jr. related to neighbor and fellow treasure-seeker Willard Chase that he had taken a book of plates from a hill. In a statement that Chase made in his 1833 affidavit, and published in 1834, he describes elements of the earliest story of Joseph Smith's claim of going to the hill, later known as the Gold Bible Hill, and further concealing the record from prying eyes. Chase recalled that Joseph Jr. explained to him:

That on the 22d of September, he arose early in the morning, and took a one horse wagon, of some one that had stayed over night at their house, without leave or license; and, together with his wife, repaired to the hill which contained the book. He left his wife in the wagon, by the road, and went alone to the hill, a distance of thirty or forty rods from the road; he said he then took the book out of the ground and hid it in a tree top, and returned home. He then went to the town of Macedon to work.

After about ten days, it having been suggested that some one had got his book, his wife went after him; he hired a horse, and went home in the afternoon, staid long enough to drink one cup of tea, and then went for his book, found it safe, took off his frock, wrapt it round it, put it under his arm and ran all the way home, a distance of about two miles. He said he should think it would weigh sixty pounds, and was sure it would weigh forty.

On his return home, he said he was attacked by two men in the woods, and knocked them both down and made his escape, arrived safe and secured his treasure.—He then observed that if it had not been for that stone, (which he acknowledged belonged to me,) he would not have obtained the book.²⁹

Lucy Smith heard that her son Joseph “went to bring the record which he had deposited in a cavity in a birch log 3 [*sic*] miles distant and covered it with the bark of the same he took the plates from their place and wrapping them in his linen frock put them under his arm and started for the house.”³⁰

Martin Harris, interviewed thirty years later, stated: “These plates were found at the north point of a hill two miles north of Manchester village. Joseph had a stone which was dug from the well of Mason Chase, twenty-four feet from the surface. In this stone he could see many things to my certain knowledge. It was by means of this stone he first discovered these plates.” Harris's understanding of the events is that Joseph Jr. “went to the place where the plates were concealed, and while he was obtaining them, she [Emma] kneeled down and prayed. He then took the plates and hid them in an old black oak tree top which was hollow.”³¹

²⁹ Affidavit of Willard Chase, December 11, 1833, in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 245–46.

³⁰ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 385, crossed through words omitted.

³¹ In late January 1859, Martin Harris, who resided at Kirtland, Ohio, was interviewed by Joel Tiffany. “He [Harris] says that Joel Tiffany, well known as a leading Spiritualist some time since, has been out from New York lately on a visit to him, Harris, and that for four successive

As Martin Harris understood the story:

The plates remained concealed in the tree top until he got the chest made. He then went after them and brought them home. While on his way home with the plates, he was met by what appeared to be a man, who demanded the plates, and struck him with a club on his side, which was all black and blue. Joseph knocked the man down, and then ran for home, and was much out of breath. When he arrived at home, he handed the plates in at the window, and they were received from him by his mother. They were then hidden under the hearth in his father's house. But the wall being partly down, it was feared that certain ones, who were trying to get possession of the plates, would get under the house and dig them out. Joseph then took them out, and hid them under the old cooper's shop, by taking up a board and digging in the ground and burying them.

Harris indicated: "I had the account of it from Joseph, his wife, brothers, sisters, his father and mother. I talked with them separately, that I might get the truth of the matter." Martin mentioned that Lucy Smith came and visited the Harris home. Among other things, "She wished my wife and daughter to go with her; and they went and spent most of the day. When they came home, I questioned them about them. My daughter said, they were about as much as she could lift. They were now in the glass-box, and my wife said they were very heavy. They both lifted them. I waited a day or two, when I got up in the morning, took my breakfast, and told my folks I was going to the village, but went directly to old Mr. Smith's." Harris continued:

I found that Joseph had gone away to work for Peter Ingersol^[1] to get some flour. I was glad he was absent, for that gave me an opportunity of talking with his wife and the family about the plates. I talked with them separately, to see if their stories agreed, and I found they did agree. When Joseph came home I did not wish him to know that I had been talking with them, so I took him by the arm and led him away from the rest, and requested him to tell me the story, which he did as follows. He said: "An angel had appeared to him, and told him it was God's work." ... Joseph had before this described the manner of his finding the plates. He found them by looking in the stone found in the well of Mason Chase. The family had likewise told me the same thing. Joseph said the angel told him he must quit the company of the money-diggers.

Harris was at the Smith home after Joseph Knight Sr. (1772–1847) and Josiah Stowell Sr. had left to return to their homes in southern New York. Lucy Smith outlined the time frame

days without intermission, he unfolded the mysteries of godliness to Joel, which the latter copied at the time and is about to publish." "Mormon Times in Kirtland," *Cleveland Daily Plain Dealer* 15 (May 18, 1859), Cleveland, Ohio. The interview by Tiffany was titled, "Mormonism—No. II," and printed in *Tiffany's Monthly: Devoted to the Investigation of the Science of Mind, in the Physical, Intellectual, Moral and Religious Planes Thereof* 5 (August 1859): 163–70, New York City. An original copy is located at the American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts.

from when Joseph Jr. allegedly went to the hill, hid the plates, and brought them home. It appears that the day Joseph Jr. reportedly retrieved, ran through the woods, brought something home, and talked to his family was on Monday, October 1, 1827.³² Joseph Jr. explained in the Preface to the 1830 Book of Mormon: “I would also inform you that the plates of which hath been spoken, were found in the township of Manchester, Ontario county, New-York.”³³

Young Joseph left Manchester with the monetary assistance of Martin Harris to live in Harmony, Susquehanna County, in northern Pennsylvania. While there Isaac Hale mentioned Joseph Smith’s prior workings in the area and what he knew of Smith “reading” the gold plates. Hale reported: “his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by means of a stone placed in his hat, and his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure.... The manner in which he pretended to read and interpret, was the same as when he looked for the money-diggers, with the stone in his hat, and his hat over his face, while the Book of Plates were at the same time hid in the woods!”³⁴

Lucy Smith said that a man named Oliver Cowdery (1806–50) was accepted to teach school and boarded with the Smith family. Cowdery started hearing accounts about the plates, and eventually Joseph Sr. explained to him what he knew. Oliver therefore determined to visit Joseph Jr. in Harmony. The Smiths had to vacate the frame house started by Alvin and crowd back into their former log house with Hyrum’s family³⁵ because Mary Anne Durfee (1799–1883), daughter of Lemuel Durfee Sr., needed to move onto the farm as it was the property of her late father. She had married Roswell Nichols (1795–1880) in 1822 after Roswell’s first wife, Maria Gibson (1799–?) died.

The Nichols family moved in 1842 to Illinois. A brief account of the life of Roswell Nichols mentions, “About the year 1828, Mr. Nichols removed to Ontario County, N. Y., and settled on what was known as the Jo Smith farm ... The Prophet [*sic*; Smith family] occupied a log house on one corner of the farm for some months after Mr. Nichols took possession.”³⁶ The Smith family’s move occurred about April 1829, and they resided there for a year and a half until October 1830.

³² Lucy Smith on October 8, 1845 said “it was eighteen years ago last monday since she commenced preaching the gospel, being cal[l]ed upon by Joseph to go & tell Martin Harris & family that he [Joseph Smith] had got the plates.” Ronald O. Barney, ed., *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847: Norton Jacob’s Record* (Logan: Utah State University Press, 2005), 53.

³³ Preface to Joseph Smith, Junior, *The Book of Mormon* (Palmyra: Printed by E. B. Grandin, for the Author, 1830), iv, cited hereafter as 1830 Book of Mormon.

³⁴ Affidavit of Isaac Hale, before Justice of the Peace, Charles Dimon, March 20, 1834, in *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 (May 1, 1834): 1; also in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 263–64.

³⁵ Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 431–38. Oliver’s half-sister wrote that he “taught [in] the District school in the Town of manchester.” Lucy Cowdery Young to Brigham H. Young, March 7, 1887, LDS Church History Library.

³⁶ *Portrait and Biographical Record of Hankakee County Illinois* (Chicago: Lake City Publishing Co., 1893), 336.

Writing the Book of Lehi and the Book of Mormon

At Harmony, Pennsylvania, Joseph Smith Jr. dictated over one hundred manuscript pages of text which he described as the Book of Lehi.³⁷ His main scribe was Martin Harris who asked to borrow the pages to show to family members. Joseph finally gave the pages to Harris, who lost them. Not hearing anything from Harris since he had left, and after burying their first child, Smith made the trip to Manchester. This was a trying time for Joseph, as explained by his mother, who described her son's reaction when he learned from Martin Harris that the pages were lost:

Joseph who had smothered his fears till now sprang from the table exclaimed Oh! Martin have you lost that manuscript? have you broken your oath and brought down condemnation upon my head as well as your own[?] Yes replied Martin it is gone and I know not where—Oh! My God My God said Joseph clenching his hands together all is lost is lost what shall I do I have sinned it is me that tempted the wrath of God ... he wept and groaned walking the floor continual[ly]³⁸

Joseph Jr. returned back to his home and to Emma in Harmony and pronounced his first recorded “revelation” in July 1828. Oliver Cowdery arrived in early April 1829 and became the major scribe for a large part of the Book of Mormon. Though it was a struggle for Joseph about what to do regarding the pages that Harris lost, Joseph decided to replace the lost initial pages by repeating the story of Lehi in a different way. These manuscript pages were written at the home of Peter Whitmer Sr. (1773–1854), in Fayette, Seneca County, New York. Whitmer's sons assisted Oliver Cowdery as scribes in replacing the basic story that was lost the previous year from the Book of Lehi. The writing of the Book of Mormon was completed at the Whitmer home about the end of June 1829.

Eight men said that Joseph Jr. displayed to them the Book of Mormon plates and that they had handled them. The members of these two families (Hiram Page married Catherine Whitmer in 1825) added their names to a testimony concerning the plates. Lucy Smith is the source that this event occurred in Manchester:

the male part of the company repaired to a little grove where it was customary for the family to offer up their secret prayers. as Joseph had been instructed that the plates would be carried there by one of the ancient Nephites. Here <it> was that those 8 witnesses recorded in the Book of Mormon looked upon the plates and handled them³⁹

³⁷ Preface to 1830 Book of Mormon.

³⁸ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 418.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 455–56.

THE TESTIMONY OF EIGHT WITNESSES⁴⁰

BE it known unto all nations, kindreds, tongues, and people, unto whom this work shall come, that Joseph Smith, Jr. the Author and Proprietor of this work, has shewn unto us the plates of which hath been spoken, which have the appearance of gold; and as many of the leaves as the said Smith has translated, we did handle with our hands; and we also saw the engravings thereon, all of which has the appearance of ancient work, and of curious workmanship. And this we bear record, with words of soberness, that the said Smith has shewn unto us, for we have seen and hefted, and know of a surety, that the said Smith has got the plates of which we have spoken. And we give our names unto the world, to witness unto the world that which we have seen: and we lie not, God bearing witness of it.

CHRISTIAN WHITMER,
JACOB WHITMER,
PETER WHITMER, JR.
JOHN WHITMER,
HIRAM PAGE,
JOSEPH SMITH, SEN.
HYRUM SMITH,
SAMUEL H. SMITH.

There are various interpretations regarding this joint statement. Since there is no date or location for the statement it engenders interesting observations. There is no evidence that Joseph Smith Jr. used the gold plates to translate the text of the Book of Mormon. What were said to be the plates were hidden from scribes during the writing of the book. If the plates were in plain view as Joseph translated, no one would have sound reason to doubt their existence, and the story of how they were obtained would at least be a good possibility. The purpose of the above testimony was to convince the public that there actually were plates.

Obtaining a printer for the Book of Mormon

Joseph Smith Jr. received his copyright dated June 11, 1829. Smith and Martin Harris visited Rochester, New York, to find a printer that could publish the Book of Mormon. They went to Thurlow Weed (1797–1882), a newspaper editor, who declined printing the book. They also went to Egbert B. Grandin (1806–45), editor of the *Wayne Sentinel* in Palmyra who, after Harris promised to mortgage his farm, agreed to print the book. Harris's mortgage is dated August 23, 1829. The indenture between them included the amount; "in consideration of the sum of three thousand dollars." The typesetting, printing and binding of five thousand copies of the Book of Mormon were subsequently agreed upon.⁴¹ The following announcement was printed in the *Wayne Sentinel*:

⁴⁰ 1830 Book of Mormon, [590].

⁴¹ Mortgages, Liber 3:325, Wayne County Courthouse, Lyons, New York.

Just about in this particular region, for some time past, much speculation has existed, concerning a pretended discovery, through superhuman means, of an ancient record, of a religious and divine nature and origin, written in ancient characters, impossible to be interpreted by any to whom the special gift has not been imparted by inspiration. It is generally known and spoken of as the “*Golden Bible*.” Most people entertain an idea that the whole matter is the result of a gross imposition, and a grosser superstition. It is pretended that it will be published as soon as the translation is completed. Meanwhile we have been furnished with the following, which is represented to us as intended for the title page of the work⁴²

Another article was published in August in the *Palmyra Freeman* which included additional information to the public:

The greatest piece of superstition that has ever come within the sphere of our knowledge, is one which has for some time past, and still occupies the attention of a few superstitious and bigoted individuals of this quarter. It is generally known and spoken of as the “*Golden Bible*.”—Its proselytes give the following account of it: In the fall of 1827, a person by the name of *Joseph Smith*, of Manchester, Ontario county, reported he had been visited in a dream by the spirit of the Almighty, and informed that in a certain hill in that town, was deposited this Golden Bible, containing an ancient record of divine nature and origin. After having been thrice thus visited, as he states, he proceeded to the spot, and after penetrating “mother earth” a short distance, the Bible was found, together with a huge pair of Spectacles! He had been directed, however, not to let any mortal being examine them, “under no less penalty” than instant death! They were therefore nicely wrapped up, and excluded from the “vulgar gaze of poor wicked mortals!” It was said that the *leaves* of the Bible were *plates* of gold, about eight inches long, six wide, and one eighth of an inch thick, on which were engraved characters or hieroglyphics. By placing the Spectacles in a hat, and looking into it, Smith could (he said so, at least,) interpret these characters.

An account of this discovery was soon circulated. The subject was almost invariably treated as it should have been—with *contempt*. A few, however, believed the “*golden*” story, among whom was *Martin Harris*, an honest and industrious farmer of this town. So blindly enthusiastic was Harris, that he took some of the characters interpreted by Smith, and went in search of some one, besides the interpreter, who was learned enough to *English* them; but all to whom he applied (among the number was Professor Mitchell, of New York,) happened not to be possessed of sufficient knowledge to give satisfaction! Harris returned, and set Smith to work at interpreting the Bible. He has at length performed the task, and the work is soon to be put to press in this village!! Its language and doctrines are said to be far superior to those of the Book of Life!!!

⁴² “Just about in this particular region,” *Wayne Sentinel* 6, no. 40 (June 26, 1829): 3, emphasis retained. For additional information on the secular and religious background of the Smith family see, Marquardt, *Rise of Mormonism: 1816–1844*, 21–32 or chapter 2 in this book.

Now it appears not a little strange that there should have been deposited in this western world, and in the secluded town of Manchester, too, a record of this description: and still more so, that a person like this Smith (very illiterate) should have been gifted by inspiration to read and interpret it. It should be recorded as a “*new thing under the sun.*” It is certainly a “*new thing*” in the history of superstition, bigotry, inconsistency, and foolishness! It should, and it doubtless will, be treated with the neglect it merits. The public should not be imposed upon by this work, pronounced as it is, by its proselytes, to be superior in style, and more advantageous to mankind, than the Holy Bible!

The following, it is said, will be the title page of the work:

“The *Book of Mormon*; an account, written by the hand of Mormon upon plates, taken from the plates of Nephi:—

“Wherefore it is an abridgement of the record of the people of Nephi, and also of the Lamanites, written to the Lamanites, which are a remnant of the house of Israel; and also to the Jew and Gentiles; written by way of commandment, and also by the spirit of prophecy and of revelation; written and sealed and hid up unto the Lord, that they might not be destroyed,—to come forth by the gift and power of God unto the interpretation thereof—sealed up by the hand of Moroni, and hid up unto the Lord, to come forth in due time by the way of the Gentile—the interpretation thereof by the gift of God: an abridgement taken from the book of Ether.

“Also, which is a record of the people of Jared, which were scattered at the time the Lord confounded the language of the people, when they were building a tower to get to Heaven; which is to shew unto the remnant of the house of Israel how great things the Lord hath done for their fathers: and that they may know the covenants of the Lord, that they are not cast off forever; and also to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, manifesting himself unto all nations. And now, If there be fault it be the mistake of men: wherefore condemn not the things of God, that ye may be found spotless at the judgment seat of Christ.—By JOSEPH SMITH, Junior, Author and Proprietor.”⁴³

Oliver Cowdery was staying at the log home where the two Smith families were living. He began making a copy of the manuscript of the Book of Mormon for the printer to typeset. The manuscript Oliver prepared is known as the printer’s manuscript. Enough of the text from the original manuscript was copied to supply the main typesetter, twenty-seven-year-old John H. Gilbert (1802–95). According to Lucy, “Peter Whitmer [Jr.] was commanded to remain at our

⁴³ “Golden Bible,” *Palmyra Freeman* 1, no. 38 (August 11, 1829): 2, emphasis retained. Digital copy from the Richmond Memorial Library, Batavia, New York. The article was reprinted in the *Niagara Courier* (Lockport, New York), August 27, 1829. Also published in the *Rochester Daily Advertiser and Telegraph* (Rochester, New York) August 31, 1829 and *New-York Telescope* (New York City) February 20, 1830.

house to assist in guarding the writings.”⁴⁴ Tradition is that the paper used to print the Book of Mormon came from the mill of Case, Abbey & Company.⁴⁵

A number of individuals visited the Smiths during the printing of the Book of Mormon. Their recollections cover a time period of 1845–82. Stephen S. Harding (1808–91) remembered that during the summer of 1829 he went to the *Wayne Sentinel* office and to the Smith residence in Manchester, which he described as “a log house, not exactly a cabin. Upon our arrival, I was ushered into the best room in company with the others.” Oliver Cowdery read from the Book of Mormon manuscript. When Harding returned to the printing office a few weeks later, he was given a copy of a proof sheet that included the title page.⁴⁶

Another interested individual was Solomon Chamberlain (1788–1862), who visited the Smith family: “I soon arrived at the house, and found Hyrum walking the floor; as I entered the room, I said peace be to this house; he looked at me and said ‘I hope it will be peace.’ I then said is there any one here that believes in visions and revelations. He [Hyrum] said yes, we are a visionary house.”⁴⁷ Thomas B. Marsh (1800–1866) arrived in Palmyra from Massachusetts after hearing from a lady about a golden book found by Joseph Smith. Marsh described visiting the Grandin printing office:

I returned back westward and found Martin Harris at the printing office, in Palmyra, where the first sixteen pages of the Book of Mormon had just been struck off, the proof sheet of which I obtained from the printer and took with me. As soon as Martin Harris found out my intentions he took me to the house of Joseph Smith, sen. . . . Here I found Oliver Cowdery, who gave me all the information concerning the book I desired. After staying there two days I started for Charleston, Mass., highly pleased with the information I had obtained concerning the new found book.⁴⁸

A letter that Oliver Cowdery wrote to Joseph Smith Jr. states that he received a letter from Thomas Marsh and in addition states that he had copied the text of the original manuscript to page 161 of the printer’s manuscript. Two of Cowdery’s letters includes passages from the Book of Mormon manuscript (original spelling retained):

Manchester November the 6th 1829
Brother Joseph Smith Jr.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 459. Both the printer’s and the original manuscripts were used for the typesetting the 1830 Book of Mormon.

⁴⁵ “Manchester in the Early Days. No. XXI,” *Ontario County Times* (Canandaigua, New York) 25, no. 11 (March 17, 1875): 1.

⁴⁶ Letter of Stephen S. Harding, Milan, Indiana, February 1882, in Thomas Gregg, *The Prophet of Palmyra* (New York: John B. Alden, Publisher, 1890), 41–42, 48, 52.

⁴⁷ Account of Solomon Chamberlain, published in Dean C. Jessee, ed., “The John Taylor Nauvoo Journal,” *Brigham Young University Studies* 23 (Summer 1983): 45, copied into Taylor’s journal in the spring of 1845. Original in LDS Church History Library.

⁴⁸ “History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh,” *Deseret News* (Fillmore City, Utah Territory) 8 (March 24, 1858): 18.

I received your let[t]er yesterday bearing date Oct. 22d I had long time expected to hear from you and had often enquired at the post office for a letter and of course it was gladly received by us all we rejoice to hear that you are well and we also rejoice to hear that you have a prospect of obtaining Some mon[e]y and we further rejo[i]ce that you are at rest from your percecutors [persecutors] and we rejoic[e] the most to hear of your faithfulness in christ

my dear Brother when I think of the goodness of christ I feel no desire to live or Stay here upon the shores of this world of iniquity only to to Ser[v]e my maker and be if possible an instriment [instrument] in his hands of doing Some good in his cause with his grace to assist me when I consider and try to realise [realize] what he has done for me I am astonished and amazed why Should I not be for while I was rushing on in sin and crouding [crowding] my way down to that awful gulf he yet Strove with me and praised be his holy and Eternal name

he has redeemed my Soul from endless torment and wo not for any thing that I have me[r]ited or any worthyness there was in me for there was none but it was in and through his own mercy wraught [wrought] out by his own infinite wisdom by preparing from all Eternity a means whereby man could be saved on conditions of repentance and faith on that infinite attonement which was to be mad[e] by a great and last Sacrif[i]ce which Sacr[i]fice was the death of the only begotten of the Father yea the eternal Father of Heaven and of Earth

that by his reserection [resurrection] all the Family of man might be braught back into the presance [presence] of God if therefore we follow christ in all things whatsoever he comma[n]deth us and are buried with him by baptism into death that like as christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Eternal Father even So we also Should walk in newness of life and if we walk in newness of life to the end of this probation at the day of accounts we Shall be caught up in clouds to meet the Lord in the air

but I need not undertake to write of the goodness of God for his goodness is unspeakable ne[i]ther tell of the miteries [mysteries] of God for what is man that he can comprehend and Search out the wisdom of deity for Great is the misteries of Godliness therefore my only motive in this writing is to inform you of my prospects and hopes and my desires and my longing to be freed from Sin and to rest in the kingdom of my Savior and my redeemer

when I begin to write of the mercies of God I know not when to Stop but time and paper fails I would inform [you] that Hiram [Hyrum Smith] and Martin [Harris] went out to fayette last week they had a joyful time and found all in as good health as could be expected Martin thinks of coming to the South in the course of two or three weeks and will callculate to take back that horse

the printing goes rather Slow yet as the type founder has been sick but we expect that the type will be on and Mr. Granden [Grandin] Still think[s] he will finish printing by the first of feb[r]uary we all send respects to yourself and Emma

My dear Brother I cannot hardly feel to close this letter as yet without informing you that we received one from Mr [Thomas B.] Marsh from Boston[,] Masacuchsetts [Massachusetts] dated the 25th Oct. he informs us that he wishes to

hear from us and know of our welfare he says he has talked considerable to Some respecting our work with freedom but others could not because they had no ears

my great desire is that we may be faithful and obedient and humble children of Christ here that we may meet together in his kingdom of Eternal Glory to go no more out to Spend an Eternity where the wicked cease from troubling and the humble and penitent child in christ finds rest I remain with much Esteem and profound respect your Brother and companion in tribulation and persecution in the kingdom of patience and hope of a Glorious resurrection in christ our Savior and redeemer Amen

Oliver Cowdery

Joseph Smith Jr

P S I have Just got to almas commandment to his Son in copying [copying] the manuscript we are all in tolerable health here but my Father's health is poor⁴⁹

The following comes from a printed copy of a November 9, 1829, letter of Oliver H. P. Cowdery. It was cited by Cornelius C. Blatchly (1773–1831) of New York City with Blatchly's comments interspersed between the contents of the letter. Cowdery wrote to Blatchly at the request of Martin Harris and others:

“Palmyra, Wayne, co., N. Y., Nov. 9th, 1829.

Sir;— You wrote to Mr. Harris, some time since, respecting the book of Mormon, of which he was concerned in the publication.”—

“Your first inquiry was, whether it was proper to say, that Joseph Smith Jr., was the author? If I rightly understand the meaning of the word author, it is, the first beginner, or mover of any thing, or a writer.⁵⁰ Now Joseph Smith Jr., certainly was the writer of the work, called the book of Mormon, which was written in ancient Egyptian characters,—which was a dead record to us until translated. And he, by a gift from God, has translated it into our language. Certainly he was the writer of it, and could be no less than the author.”

“This record which gives an account of the first inhabitants of this continent, is engraved on plates, which have the appearance of gold; and they are of very curious workmanship.”

“The reason stated in a prophecy written before the coming of Christ in the flesh, why the record should not be shown to all the world, at the time of its coming forth to the children of men is that the book should be sealed, by the power of God.”

⁴⁹ Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith Jr., November 6, 1829, copied in 1832 into Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:6–8, LDS Church History Library. Words added above the line in the two copied 1829 letters are not included in angled brackets.

⁵⁰ The same definition offered by Cowdery can be found in [John] Walker's *Critical Pronouncing Dictionary and Expositor of the English Language. Abridged. By the Rev. Thomas Smith, London* (Canandaigua [New York]: Printed and Sold by J. D. Bemis & Co., 1824), 39. Brought to my attention by Rick Grunder.

“The prophecy also states there shall also be a revelation sealed in the book, which will reveal all things from the foundation of the world to the end thereof.” And because of the iniquity of the world, at the time of its coming forth; it shall be hid from the eyes of the world; that the eyes of none shall behold it, (save it be that three witnesses shall behold it by the power of God) besides him, to whom the book should be delivered. And none other should see it, only a few,—if it should be wisdom in God.”

“And after that which was not sealed, was translated, the book should again be hid-up, unto the Lord, that it might not be destroyed; and come forth again, in the own due time of him, who knows all things unto the children of men.”

“You also wished Mr. Harris to inform you respecting his seeing this book, whether there could not possibly have been some juggling at the bottom of it. A few words on that point may suffice.—

“It was a clear, open beautiful day, far from any inhabitants, in a remote field, at the time we saw the record, of which it has been spoken, brought and laid before us, by an angel, arrayed in glorious light, ascend out of the midst of heaven.”

“Now if this is human juggling—judge ye.”

Yours with much esteem,

OLIVER H. P. COWDERY

“P. S. I write this at the request of Messrs. Harris and others. The edition of this work now printing will not possibly be finished before the first of next February 1830.”⁵¹

Near the end of December Oliver Cowdery explained that Joseph Sr, was planning on visiting Joseph and he indicates that he has “become a printer” (original spelling retained):

Manchester Deceember [December] 28th AD 1829

Brother Joseph Smith Jr

It may Seem Supe[r]fluous for me to write as Father [Joseph Smith Sr.] is going directly to your country but knowing that if a line from under my hand is as gladly rec[e]ived by you as one from you would at all times be by me I cannot in duty to my feelings let this oppertunity [opportunity] pass u[n]inproved Your great anxiety will probably be to know of the progress of the work in the which we are So deeply engaged and possibly our Souls wellfare al[I] of which Father can make known unto you

it may look rather Strange to you to find that I have So Soon become a printer and you may cast in your mind what I Shall become next but be as[s]ured my cahngeing [changing] business has not in any degree I trust taken my mind from

⁵¹ “The New Bible,” *Gospel Luminary* (New York City) 2, no. 49, (December 10, 1829): 194, emphasis omitted. Brought to my attention by Erin Jennings Metcalfe. The letter was referred to by Blatchly in “Caution Against the Golden Bible,” *New-York Telescope* 6, no. 38 (February 20, 1830): 150.

meditateing [meditating] upon my mission which I have been called to fulfill nor of Slacking my diligence in pray[e]r and fasting but but Some times I feel almost as though I could quit time and fly away and be at rest in the Bosom of my Redeemer for the many deep feelings of Sorrow and the many long Struglings in prayr [prayers] of Sorrow for the Sins of my fellow beings and also for those who pretend to be of my faith almost as it were Seperateth my spirit from my mortal body

do not think by this my Brother that I would give you to understand that I am freed from Sin and temptations no not by any means that is what I would that you Should understand is my anxiety at some times to be at rest in the Paradise [Paradise] of my God is to be freed from temptation &c. You have our pray[e]rs and our best wishes

Yours in Christ Amen
Oliver H P Cowd[e]ry

Joseph Smith Jr
P S we Send our respects to Emma [Smith] &c⁵²

The Smiths maintained control over the printing and sale of the book. Joseph Smith Sr. made an agreement with Martin Harris on selling copies of the forthcoming Book of Mormon to pay for the publication of the Book of Mormon:

I hereby agree that Martin Harris shall have an equal privilege with me & my friends of selling the Book of Mormon of the Edition now printing by Egbert B Grandin until enough of them shall be sold to pay for the printing of the same or until such times as the said Grandin shall be paid for the printing the aforesaid Books or copies[.]

[s] Joseph Smith Sr

Manchester January the 16th 1830
Witness [s] Oliver H P Cowdery⁵³

The cost of printing each book, including binding, was sixty cents. As mentioned, with a total of five thousand copies printed, the total cost was \$3,000. Martin Harris was assured of having enough books to sell to recover his investment in the printing.

On January 19, 1830, Lemuel Durfee Jr. (1801–71) brought a suit against Joseph Smith Sr. and Abraham Fish for \$39.92, which was paid on August 28. Durfee received his money on September 13. The suit was heard by Nathan Pierce, a Justice of the Peace in Manchester, Ontario County, where Joseph Sr. was residing while Durfee was a resident of Palmyra, Wayne County. This suit and the next one against Hyrum Smith are important as they further indicate the residence of the Joseph Sr. and Hyrum Smith families in Manchester, Ontario County.

New York law indicates that action can be brought by a plaintiff who resides in a different county than the defendant. Where actions of debt are claimed not to exceed fifty

⁵² Oliver Cowdery to Joseph Smith Jr., December 28, 1829, copied in 1832 into Joseph Smith Letterbook 1:4–5, LDS Church History Library.

⁵³ In Simon Gratz Autograph Collection, Case 8, Box 17 (American Miscellaneous), under Smith, Joseph, Sr., Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

dollars, “no person shall be proceeded against by summons, out of the county in which he resides.”⁵⁴ The first case against Joseph Sr. of Ontario County was brought by Lemuel Durfee Jr. of Wayne County. The second case against Hyrum Smith who was also of Ontario County was brought by Levi Daggett Sr. of Wayne County. Both cases were held before Nathan Pierce, a Justice of the Peace in Ontario County.

The following transcription is from the Nathan Pierce Docket Book, case of Lemuel Durfee Jr. vs. Joseph Smith Sr. and Abraham Fish, January 19, 1830:

<p>In Justice Court before Nathan Pierce Justice Lemuel Durfee vs Joseph Smith Abraham Fish</p>	<p>The hereby [defendants] confess Judgement in this cause at the suit of the above named plaintiff for thirty nine dollars and ninety two cents damages this 19th day of January 1830 and consent that the said Justice enter Judg ment against us accordingly [s] Joseph Smith his Abraham + Fish mark</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>Judgement Rendered on the above confession for the said sum of thirty nine dollars and ninety two cents Damage against the Said Joseph Smith and Abraham Fish in favor of the said Lemuel Durfee</p>		
<p>January 19th 1830 Nathan Pierce Justice of the peace</p>	<p>Damage Costs Judgement Execution Interest</p>	<p>\$39.92 <u>.31</u> \$40.23 .19 <u>82</u> 4</p>
<p>7th May 1830 Execution Issued to S. Southworth</p>		<p>[\$41.24]</p>
<p>28th August 1830 received the damage and my costs of S. Southworth</p>	<p>Damage Interest Costs</p>	<p>\$39.92 1.52 <u>.60</u> \$42.04</p>
<p>13th Sept 1830 received my damage \$41.44 Lemuel Durfee⁵⁵</p>		<p>[total: \$41.44]</p>

Transcription from Nathan Pierce Docket Book, case of Levi Daggett Sr. (1768–1835) of Palmyra, Wayne County, vs. Hyrum Smith of Manchester, Ontario County:⁵⁶

[Left side of Document:] [Body of Document:]

⁵⁴ “Of the Jurisdiction of Justices’ Courts,” *The Revised Statutes of the State of New-York* (Albany: Printed by Packard and Van Benthuysen, 1829), 2:228, section 13.

⁵⁵ Nathan Pierce Docket Book, 1827–30, 25, Manchester Town Office, Clifton Springs, New York.

⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, left of page 77, and execution in docket book.

money before me, on the **13th** day of **September** 1830 at my office in the town of **Manchester** in the said county, to render to the said plaintiff. And if no goods or chattels can be found, or not sufficient to satisfy this execution, then you are hereby commanded to take the body of the said defendant and convey **him** to the common Jail of the county aforesaid, there to remain until this execution shall be satisfied and paid. Hereof fail not at your peril. Given under my hand, at **Manchester** this **14th** day of **August** in the year of our Lord, 1830

Damages	\$21.07
Costs	1.79
Interest	<u>18</u>
	\$23.04

This Execution renewed for to Collect this amount due thereon this 27th September 1830

fees 19 cents

[s] **Nathan Pierce** Justice of the Peace.

Sold by Bemis & Ward, Canandaigua.

[End of Execution form]

[Reverse of Execution form]

Received of Nathan Harrington \$9.94 Cents for Levi dagget [Daggett] September the 13th 1830

Levi Daggett
By
[s] **A K Daggett**

Received on this execution \$12.81 this 13th day of September 1830

[s] **Nathan Harrington**
Constable

No property to be found Nor Boddy and I return this Execution October the 26—1830

[s] **N Harrington**
Constable

\$23.04
<u>1.59</u>
\$24.63

12
\$24.75

[End of handwriting]

Only part of what was due had been paid with interest and court cost accruing. Hyrum Smith departed Manchester and went to Colesville, Broome County, New York. About October 1830 Joseph Smith Sr. was arrested for a supposed debt and spent time in the county jail in Canandaigua.

Idea of Selling Book of Mormon Copyright in Canada

One incident that occurred about January 1830, while the Book of Mormon was at the printer's, throws light on the importance Joseph Smith Jr. placed on his copyright to the book. The revelations Smith received at Manchester were evidently written down inside the log home of Joseph Smith Sr. and Hyrum Smith. The first one was the Canadian copyright revelation. Hiram Page (1800–1852), in an 1848 letter, explains that the revelation originated at father Smith's. This may explain why the original Book of Mormon manuscript was brought to the printer and used to set the type rather than the printer's manuscript. The text suggests displeasure at Martin Harris.

A Revelation given to Joseph [Smith Jr.] Oliver [Cowdery] Hiram [Hiram Page] Josiah [Stowell] & Joseph Knight [Sr.] given at Manchester Ontario C[ounty] New York

Behold I the Lord am God I Created the Heavens & the Earth & all things that in them is wherefore they are mine & I sway my scepter over all the Earth & ye are in my hands to will & to do that I can deliver you out of ev[e]ry difficulty & affliction according to your faith & dilligence & uprightness Before me & I have covenanted with my Servent [Joseph Smith Jr.] that earth nor Hell combined againsts him shall not take the Blessing out of his hands which I have prepared for him if he walketh uprightly before me neither the spiritual nor the temporal Blessing & Behold I also covenanted with those who have assisted him in my work that I will do unto them even the same Because they have done that which is pleasing in my sight yea even all save M[ar]tin [Harris] only it be one only

Wherefore be dilligent in Securing the Copy right of my work upon all the face of the Earth of which is known by you unto my Servent Joseph & unto him whom he willeth accordinng as I shall command him that the faithful & the righteous may retain the temperal [temporal] Blessing as well as the Spirit[u]al & also that my work be not destroyed by the workers of iniquity to their own distruction [destruction] & damnation when they are fully ripe

& now Behold I say unto you that I have covenanted & it Pleaseth me that Oliver Cowdery Joseph Knight Hiram Page & Josiah Stowel shall do my work in this thing yea even in securing the Copy right & they shall do it with an eye single to my Glory that it may be the means of bringing souls unto Salvation through mine only Begotten Behold I am God I have spoken it & it is expedient in me

Wherefor[e] I say unto you that ye shall go to Kingston seeking me continually through mine only Begotten & if ye do this ye shall have my spirit to go with you & ye shall have an addition of all things which is expedient in me & I grant unto my servent a privelige [privilege] that he may sell a copyright through you speaking after the manner of men for the four Provinces if the People harden not their hearts against the enticeings of my spirit & my word for Behold it lieth in themselves to their condemnation or to their salvation

Behold my way is before you & the means I will prepare & the Blessing I hold in mine own hand & if ye are faithful I will pour out upon you even as much as ye are able to Bear & thus it shall be Behold I am the father & it is through mine only begotten which is Jesus Christ your Redeemer amen⁵⁷

Hiram Page related his experience about the trip to Canada to William E. McLellin (1806–83) eighteen years later. In his letter Page criticized Joseph Smith because the expected outcome of their trip was unfulfilled. Page wrote:

Joseph heard that there was a chance to sell a copyright in Canada for any useful book that was used in the states. Joseph thought this would be a good opportunity to get a handsom[e] sum of money which was to be (after the expenses were taken out) for th[e] exclusive benefit of the Smith family and was to be at the disposal of Joseph accordingly Oliver Cowdrey, Joseph Knights, Hiram Page and Joseah Stoel [Josiah Stowell] were chosen ([as I understoo]d by revelation) to do the business; we were [living from] 30 to 100 miles apart the necessary preparation was [made] (by them) in a sly manor [manner] So as to keep Martin Harris from dra[w]ing a s[hare] of the money, it was told me we were to go by revelation but when we had assembled at father Smiths; the[re was] no revelation for us to go but we were all anxious to get a revelation to go; and when it came we were to go to Kingston where we were to sell if they would not harden their hearts; but when [we] got their; there was n[o] purchaser neither were they authorized at Kingston to buy rights for the province; but Little York was the place where such business had to be done; we were to get 8000 dollars [we] were treated with the best of respects by all we met with in Kingston — by the above we may learn how a revelation may be received and the person receiving it not be benefitted⁵⁸

Eight thousand dollars was a great deal of money in Smith's time. It is unlikely that anyone would have invested such a large amount of money for a copyright. Page said they went

⁵⁷ Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009), 30–33. Joseph Knight Sr. does not mention the copyright revelation in his recollection. This revelation was not included in the Book of Commandments, the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants or current printings of the Doctrine and Covenants.

⁵⁸ Hiram Page to William E. McLellin, February 2, 1848, Fishing River, Missouri, photocopy of retained copy, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri. The above is from my standardized version.

to Kingston, Ontario, Canada, and “were treated with the best of respects.” He indicated, however, that Smith was “not benefited,” meaning they obtained no money so they returned empty handed.

Page did not see anything wrong with Smith wanting to sell the copyright. David Whitmer (1805–88), who recounted the event many years later, did not seem concerned either, but was disturbed because Smith allegedly received a revelation through the seer stone that did not come to pass.⁵⁹ The revelation to sell the copyright in Canada was written down and recorded but not published until recently.

The idea of obtaining money by securing a copyright in Canada appears to be a way to bypass Martin Harris, since the revelation says that Smith’s associates have done what was pleasing in God’s sight “all save M[ar]tin.” David Whitmer said that Hyrum Smith “was vexed with Brother Martin and thought they should get the money by some means outside of him and not let him have anything to do with the publication of the Book or receiving any of the profits thereof if any profits should accrue.”⁶⁰ Hiram Page’s understanding was that part of the trip to Canada was to keep Martin Harris from having a share of the large amount of the money that was going to be realized.

Why all this emphasis relating to temporal money is an interesting question. As far as Egbert B. Grandin was concerned, he held the mortgage to a portion of Martin Harris’s property that was executed in August 1829. The agreed amount for publishing the Book of Mormon was \$3,000.

Since about September 1828, Lucy as well as Hyrum and Samuel Harrison stopped attending the Palmyra Presbyterian Church, and in March 1830 the church suspended them from participating in the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper.⁶¹ They had been attending the church in Palmyra from about March 1825 to September 1828.

Church of Christ Organized at Manchester, New York

During the last week in March 1830, Martin Harris made it to the Smith home and complained that copies of the Book of Mormon were not selling. He was still told to pay the printer’s debt. Joseph Knight Sr.’s recollection tells of his experience with Harris (original spelling retained):

Now in the Spring of 1830 I went with my Team and took Joseph [Jr.] out to Manchester to his Fathers when we was on our way he told me that there must be a Church formed But Did not tell when. Now when we got near to his fathers we Saw a man Some Eighty Rods Before us run acros the Street with a Bundle in his hand. there Says Joseph there is martin going a Cros [across] the road with Some thing in his hand Says I how Could you know him So far[?] Says he I

⁵⁹ David Whitmer in an interview published in the *Des Moines Daily News*, October 16, 1886, and David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, MO: author, 1887), 30–31.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶¹ “Records of the Session of the Presbyterian Church in Palmyra,” 2:11–13, March 3, 10, 24, 29, 1830. Original at the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, Palmyra, New York.

Believe it is him and when we Came up it was Martin with a Bunch of morman [mormon] Books he Came to us and after Compliments he Says the Books will not Sell for no Body wants them Joseph Says I think they will Sell

well Says he [Martin] I want a Commandment Why[?] Says Joseph fullfill what you have got But says he [Martin] I must have a Commandment Joseph put him off But he insisted three or four times he must have a Commandment

we went home to his Fathers and Martin with us Martin Stayed at his Fathers and Slept in a bed on the flore [floor] with me Martin awoke me in the nite [night] and asked me if I felt any thing on the Bed I told him no Says I Did you[?] yes I felt Some thing as Big as a gr[e]at Dog Sprang upon my Bre[a]st Says I was you not mistekened [mistaken] [?] no Says he it was So I Sprang up and felt But I Could see nor feal [feel] no thing.

in the morning he got up and Said he must have a Commandment to Joseph and went home. and along in the after part of the Day Joseph and Oliver Received a Commandment whi[c]h is in Book of Covenants Page. 174 ⁶²

It is of interest that although the writings in the Book of Mormon explain that the wicked would expect a hell that had no end and was therefore endless, this commandment to Harris indicates that God's name and nature are endless, but the duration of his individual punishments is not.⁶³

Commandment for Martin Harris⁶⁴

A commandment of God and not of man to you, Martin, given (Manchester, New-York, March, 1830,) by him who is eternal:

Yea, even I, I am he, the beginning and the end: Yea, Alpha and Omega, Christ the Lord, the Redeemer of the world: I having accomplished and finished the will of him whose I am, even the Father: Having done this, that I might subdue all things unto myself: Retaining all power, even to the destroying of satan and his works at the end of the world, and the last great day of judgment, which I shall pass upon the inhabitants thereof, judging every man according to his works, and the deeds which he hath done.

And surely every man must repent or suffer, for I God am endless: Wherefore, I revoke not the judgments which I shall pass, but woes shall go forth,

⁶² Joseph Knight "Reminiscences," circa 1835–1847, LDS Church History Library. The commandment that Knight refers to was first published in *A Book of Commandments*, for the Government of the Church of Christ (Zion [Independence, MO]: Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), chapter 16, and includes the date March 1830.

⁶³ 1830 Book of Mormon, 32, 37, 80–81, 114, 140, 339, 582. Oliver Cowdery's November 9, 1829, letter includes, "he has redeemed my Soul from endless torment."

⁶⁴ Book of Commandments, chapter 16. The Book of Mormon was advertized as being available for purchase on March 26, 1830, in the *Wayne Sentinel*. Shortly afterward, Martin Harris was at the Smith home in Manchester and insisted on having a commandment. The revelation would have been given between March 26 and 31, 1830.

weeping, wailing and gnashing of teeth: Yea, to those who are found on my left hand, nevertheless, it is not written, that there shall be no end to this torment; but it is written endless torment. Again, it is written eternal damnation: wherefore it is more express than other scriptures, that it might work upon the hearts of the children of men, altogether for my name's glory:

Wherefore, I will explain unto you, this mystery, for it is mete unto you, to know even as mine apostles. I speak unto you that are chosen in this thing, even as one, that you may enter into my rest. For behold, the mystery of Godliness how great is it? for behold I am endless, and the punishment which is given from my hand, is endless punishment, for endless is my name:

Wherefore—

Eternal punishment } Endless punishment
is God's punishment: } is God's punishment:

Wherefore, I command you by my name, and by my Almighty power, that you repent: repent, lest I smite you by the rod of my mouth, and by my wrath, and by my anger, and your sufferings be sore: How sore you know not! How exquisite you know not! Yea, how hard to bear you know not!

For behold, I God have suffered these things for all, that they might not suffer, if they would repent, but if they would not repent, they must suffer even as I: Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, both body and spirit: And would that I might not drink the bitter cup and shrink: Nevertheless, glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men:

Wherefore, I command you again by my Almighty power, that you confess your sins, lest you suffer these punishments of which I have spoken, of which in the smallest, yea, even in the least degree you have tasted at the time I withdrew my Spirit. And I command you, that you preach nought but repentance; and show not these things, neither speak these things unto the world, for they can not bear meat, but milk they must receive: Wherefore, they must not know these things lest they perish:

Wherefore, learn of me, and listen to my words; walk in the meekness of my Spirit and you shall have peace in me, Jesus Christ by the will of the Father. And again: I command you, that thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. Nor seek thy neighbor's life.

And again: I command you, that thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the book of Mormon, which contains the truth and the word of God, which is my word to Gentile, that soon it may go to the Jew, of which the Lamanites are a remnant; that they may believe the gospel, and look not for a Messiah to come which has already come.

And again: I command you, that thou shalt pray vocally as well as to thyself: Yea, before the world as well as in secret; in public as well as in private. And thou shalt declare glad tidings; yea, publish it upon the mountains, and upon every high place, and among every people which thou shalt be permitted to see. And thou shalt do it with all humility, trusting in me, reviling not against revilers.

And of tenets thou shalt not talk, but thou shalt declare repentance and faith on the Savior and remission of sins by baptism and by fire; yea, even the Holy Ghost.

Behold this is a great and the last commandment which I shall give unto you: For this shall suffice for thy daily walk even unto the end of thy life. And misery thou shalt receive, if thou wilt slight these counsels; Yea, even destruction of thyself and property.

Impart a portion of thy property; Yea, even a part of thy lands and all save the support of thy family. Pay the printer's debt. Release thyself from bondage. Leave thy house and home, except when thou shalt desire to see them. And speak freely to all: Yea, preach, exhort, declare the truth, even with a loud voice; with a sound of rejoicing, crying hosanna! hosanna! blessed be the name of the Lord God.

Pray always and I will pour out my Spirit upon you, and great shall be your blessing: Yea, even more than if you should obtain treasures of earth, and corruptibleness to the extent thereof. Behold, canst thou read this without rejoicing, and lifting up thy heart for gladness; or canst thou run about longer as a blind guide; or canst thou be humble and meek and conduct thyself wisely before me: Yea, come unto me thy Savior. Amen.

The text includes the commandment, "thou shalt not covet thine own property, but impart it freely to the printing of the book of Mormon" and "Pay the printer's debt." Harris had already mortgaged his farm for \$3,000 to printer Egbert B. Grandin in August 1829. The amount was to be paid by February 25, 1831 eighteen months after the signing. It was not until April 1831 that Martin Harris sold about 150 acres, twenty dollars an acre, to long time Palmyra resident Thomas Lakey.

Minutes of the Town of Manchester on Tuesday, April 6, 1830

Annual town meetings including the election of local officials were held in the state of New York on the first Tuesday in April. It is therefore of interest that in 1830 the date was April 6 the same day that the Church of Christ was established.

We the undersigners [under signers] certify that the following persons were duly Elected at the annual town meeting held at Jacob Vanderhoofs 2^d Inn in Manchester on the 6th day of April 1830 (to wit) Nicholas Howland Supervisor Nathaniel Bement town Clerk Jacob Cost James Harland William L. Drum assessors Sylvester Southworth Collector Jedediah Dewey and Stephen Alling overseers of the Poor Job Howland Sands M^cCamly and Stephen Aling Comissioners of highways Azel Throop Jedediah Dewey J^{unr} and Carlos Harmon Com= of Schools Alonzo Plat and Sands M^cCamly and Oliver L. Cooper Inspectors of Schools Sylvester Southworth Joseph Adams and Nathan Harrington Constables and Peter Mitchel Justice of the peace

Dated 7 th April 1830	David Howland	J. P.
Gahazi Granger Clerk of	Nathan Pierce	J. P.
the meeting	John Schut	J. P.

Recorded 1st May 1830

No Minutes of Church of Christ Organization

There are no known minutes that have surfaced for the organizational meeting on Tuesday, April 6, 1830. Therefore we have to depend upon other revelatory records and recollections. Oliver Cowdery, the second church elder, kept a record, but its location is unknown. John Whitmer recorded in 1831 six revelations pronounced by Joseph Smith Jr. These revelations were printed in the Book of Commandments (which went to press in 1833). In May 1834 in Ohio, the name of the Church of Christ was changed to The Church of the Latter Day Saints, and the place of organization to Fayette, Seneca County.⁶⁶ It is also possible that image-consciousness played a role. It may have seemed impressive to advertise the church's founding at a distant location, away from the Smiths' humble log cabin and critics of the family. More than likely, this was a motivation to render ambiguous the church's legal history at a time when creditors were demanding satisfaction, a rationale which might also explain why the church's name was changed in 1834.⁶⁷

Revelations of April 6, 1830

The earliest copies of revelations pronounced in Manchester were recorded in 1831 by John Whitmer (1802–78).⁶⁸ The texts were first printed in the Book of Commandments. They included five revelations for individuals and one for the church. These revelations were said to have been “given in Manchester, New-York.” In 1835 they were combined into one revelation with the location and day of the month being dropped in a new publication called the Doctrine and Covenants.

Only one revelation retained the same date when published in 1835. This was 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, section 46, which mentions that a record should be kept and that Smith should be ordained by Cowdery.⁶⁹ While the Book of Commandments and Revelations (BCR) manuscript book has the revelation as “given at Fayette Seneca County State of New York,” the location was corrected in the Book of Commandments, chapter 22, to “given in Manchester, New York.” Oliver Cowdery, who was present on April 6, assisted in the printing of the Book of

⁶⁵ Manchester Town Records, April 6, 1830, Manchester Town Office.

⁶⁶ “Communicated,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* (Kirtland, Ohio) 2, no. 20 (May 1834): 160.

⁶⁷ For a possible reason to change for legal protection see H. Michael Marquardt, “Manchester as the Site of the Organization of the Church on April 6, 1830,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 33, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2013): 148–52.

⁶⁸ Robin Scott Jensen, et al., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 26–31. The revelations were copied into the Book of Commandments and Revelations manuscript book. The text of the six revelations cited come from this manuscript volume. They were included in Book of Commandments, chapters 22 and 17–21.

⁶⁹ *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints* (Kirtland, OH: Printed by F. G. Williams & co., 1835), 177–78.

Commandments. All indications confirm that Smith and Cowdery were present at the Smith residence at the time of this historic meeting.⁷⁰

Below is the text from the manuscript volume. For comparison purposes, after the manuscript heading, listed as BCR, the heading as printed in the Book of Commandments follows, and then is cited the text from the BCR. While the headings have changed the text is the same.

Revelation for Oliver Cowdery

BCR: A Revelation to Oliver given at Manchester Ontario Co[unty] State of New York
Soon after his calling to the Ministry

Book of Commandments, chapter 17:

A Revelation to Oliver, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830.

BCR: Behold I speak unto you, Oliver, a few words Behold thou art Blessed & art under no condemnation but beware of pride lest thou shouldest enter into temptation make known thy Calling unto the Church & also before the World & thy heart shall be opened to Preach the truth from henceforth & for ever amen

Revelation for Hyrum Smith

BCR: A Commandment to Hiram given at Manchester Ontario County State of New York

Book of Commandments, chapter 18:

A Revelation to Hyrum, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830.

BCR: Behold I speak unto you, Hiram, a few words: for thou also art under no condemnation, & thy heart is opened, & thy tongue loosed; & thy Calling is to exhortation, & to strengthen the Church continually. wherefore thy duty is unto the Church forever; & this because of thy family. Amen

Revelation for Samuel Harrison Smith

BCR: A Revelation to Samuel given at Manchester Ontario Co[unty] N. Y.

Book of Commandments, chapter 19:

A Revelation to Samuel, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830.

⁷⁰ H. Michael Marquardt, "An Appraisal of Manchester as Location for the Organization of the Church," *Sunstone* 16 (February 1992): 49–57.

BCR: Behold I speak a few words unto you, Samuel. for thou also art under no condemnation, & thy calling is to Exhortation, and to strengthen the Church. & thou art not as yet called to prea[c]h before the world. Amen.

Revelation for Joseph Smith Sr.

BCR: A Commandment to given to Joseph at Manchester Ontario County State of New York

Book of Commandments, chapter 20:

A Revelation to Joseph, the father of Joseph, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830.

BCR: Behold I speak a few words unto you, Joseph: for thou art under no condemnation, & thy calling also is to Exhortation, & to strengthen the Church. & this is thy duty from henceforth & forever. amen.

Revelation for Joseph Knight Sr.⁷¹

BCR: A Commandment to Joseph Knight given at Manchester Ontario County State of New York

Book of Commandments, chapter 21:

A Revelation to Joseph (K.,) given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830.

BCR: Behold I manifest unto you by these words, that thou must take up thy Cross, in the which thou must pray vocally, before the World, as well as in Seecret [Secret], & in thy family & among thy friends, & in all Places. & Behold it is thy duty to unite with the true Church, & give thy Language to Exhortation continually, that thou mayest Receive the reward of the Labourer [Laborer]. amen.

Revelation for Joseph Smith Jr. and the Church of Christ⁷²

BCR: A Revelation to Joseph the Seer by way of commandment to the Church given at Fayette Seneca County State of New York⁷³

Book of Commandments, chapter 22:

A Revelation to Joseph, given in Manchester, New-York, April 6, 1830.

⁷¹ Joseph Knight Sr. was not baptized at this time. He had not read the Book of Mormon and wanted to examine it more closely.

⁷² This revelation gives instructions for Oliver Cowdery to proceed with ordaining Joseph Smith as a prophet and seer over the church.

⁷³ Book of Commandments 22:1 corrects the location to “given in Manchester, New-York.”

BCR: A Revelation to me Joseph by way of commandment to the church Behold there Shall be a Record kept among you & in it thou shalt be called a seer a Translator [Translator] A Prop[h]et an Apostle of Jesus Christ an Elder of the Church through the will of God the Father & the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ being inspired of the Holy Ghost to lay the foundation thereof & to build it up unto the most holy faith which Church was Organized & established in the year of our Lord one thousand Eight Hundred & Thirty in the fo[u]rth Month on the Sixth day of the month which is called April

Wherefore meaning the Church thou shalt give heed unto all his words & commandments which he Shall give unto you as he receiveth them wa[l]king in all holyness [holiness] before me for his word ye shall receive as if from mine own mouth in all Patience & faith for by doing these things the gaits [gates] of Hell shall not prevail against you yea & the Lord God will disperse the Powers of darkness from before you & cause the Heavens to shake for your Good & his name[']s glory

for thus saith the Lord God him have I inspired to move the cause of Zion in Mighty power for good & his dilligence [diligence] I know & his prayers I have heard yea his weeping for Zion I have seen & I will cause that He shall mourn for her no longer for his days of rejoicing are come unto the remission of his Sins & the manifestations of my blessings upon his works for behold, I will bless all those who Labour [Labor] in my Vin[e]yard with a mighty blessing & they shall believe on his words which are given him through me by the comforter which manifesteth that Jesus was Crusified [Crucified] by sinfull men for the Sins of the world yea for the remission of sins unto the contrite heart

Wherefore it behooveth me that he should be ordained by you Oliver [Cowdery] mine Apostle this being an Ordinance unto you that ye are an Elder under his hand he being the first unto you that thou mightest be an Elder unto this Church of Christ bearing my name & the first Preacher of this Church unto the Church & before the world yea before the gentiles yea & thus saith the Lord God Lo. Lo. to the Jews also Amen

During preparations for publishing Joseph Smith's revelations, locations were provided where each revelation was spoken and systematically included. We find in the first church periodical, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the earliest brief history dealing with the month of April.

Soon after the book of Mormon came forth, containing the fulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ, the church was organized on the sixth of April, in Manchester; soon after, a branch was established in Fayette, and the June following, another in Colesville, New York.⁷⁴

⁷⁴ "Rise and Progress of the Church of Christ," *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1, no. 11 (April 1833): 84. Oliver Cowdery, present at the April 6 meeting, where he received his ordination as second elder, assisted in the printing of the *Star*.

Baptisms on April 6, 1830

The baptisms of Joseph Smith's parents, their neighbor Mrs. Sarah Rockwell (1785–?) and friend Martin Harris were part of the activities associated with the organization of the church. The draft of the church manuscript history follows an 1834 change in location to Fayette, New York. James Mulholland (1804–39) included in his draft the following:

Several persons who attended this meeting, but who had <not> as yet been baptized, came forward shortly after, and were received into the church having on that occasion got entirely convinced of the truth of the work. <Among th[e] rest Father Smith, Martin Harris & Mother Smith>⁷⁵

The final manuscript reads:

Several persons who had attended the above meeting, and got convinced of the truth, came forward shortly after, and were received into the church, among the rest My own Father and Mother were baptized to my great joy and consolation, and about the same time, Martin Harris and a [blank space] Rockwell.⁷⁶

Lucy Smith's narrative mentions the baptism of her husband and the joy her son Joseph experienced:

in the spring Joseph came up <and preached to us> after ~~the books were~~ <Oliver got throu[g]h> with the Book ~~and~~ <My Husband and> Martin H[a]rris was ba[p]tized Joseph stood on the shore when his father came out of the water and as he took him by the hand he cried out Oh! my God I have lived to see my father baptized into the true church of Jesus christ and <he> covered his face ~~with and wept like and infant~~ sobbed upon his father's bosom ~~like an infant~~ <in his father[']s bosom and wept aloud like for joy as did> Joseph of old when he beheld his father coming up into the land of Egypt this took place on the sixth of April 1830, the d[a]y on which the church was organized⁷⁷

Joseph Knight Sr. wrote his account concerning obtaining bound copies of the Book of Mormon and also some of the events held on April 6 (original spelling retained):

I Stay[e]d a few Days wa[i]ting for some Books [of Mormon] to Be Bound. Joseph Said there must Be a Church B[u]iltup I had Be[e]n there Several

⁷⁵ Joseph Smith History, circa June–October 1839, draft by James Mulholland, LDS Church History Library. A notation: “Mother Smith & Sister Rockwell 2 or 3 days afterward” was not used for the above history draft as Lucy Smith was baptized on the same day as her husband.

⁷⁶ Manuscript History, Book A-1:38, LDS Church History Library. The history was printed as the “History of Joseph Smith,” ending, “about the same time Martin Harris and A. [sic] Rockwell.” *Times and Seasons* 4, no. 1 (November 15, 1842): 12, Nauvoo, Illinois.

⁷⁷ Lucy Mack Smith History, 1844–1845, LDS Church History Library; also in Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 477.

Days old Mr Smith and Martin Harris Come forrod [forward] to Be Baptise[d] for the first they found a place in a Lot a Small Stream ran thro[ugh] and they were Babtized in the Evening Because of persecution they went forward and was Babtized Being the first I Saw Babtized in the new and everlasting Covenant ...

there was one thing I will mention that evening that old Brother Smith and Martin Harris was Babtised Joseph was fild [filled] with the Spirrit to a grate Degree to See his Father and Mr Harris that he had Bin [Been] with So much he Bast [Burst] out with greaf and Joy and Seamed as tho[ugh] the world Could not hold him he went out into the Lot and appear[e]d to want to git [get] out of site of every Body and would Sob and Crie and Seamed to Be so full that he Could not Live oliver and I went after him and Came to him and after a while he Came in

But he was the most wrot [wrought] upon that I ever Saw any man But his Joy Seemed to Be full I think he Saw the grate [great] work he had Begun and was Desirus [Desirous] to Carry it out.

on the Sixth Day of April 1830 he Begun the Church with Six members and received the following Revelation Book of Covenants Page 177 they all kneel[e]d Down and prayed and Joseph gave them instructions how to Bild [Build] up the Church and ex[h]orted them to Be faithfull in all things for this is the work of God⁷⁸

In her history Lucy does not mention her own baptism. But a neighbor, Cornelius R. Stafford (1813–?), recalled that as a young man he “saw old Jo Smith, his wife and Mrs. [Sarah W.] Rockwell baptized by prophet Jo Smith.”⁷⁹ Stafford says the baptisms were performed by Joseph Jr. other sources have Oliver Cowdery. It is possible that both did baptisms that day. Benjamin Saunders (1814–93), fifteen years old at the time, recollected: “I was there when they first baptized. Oliver Cowdery did the baptizing. Old brother <Smith> was baptized at that time and I think old Mrs. Rockwell.”⁸⁰ Martin Harris recalled that he was not baptized “untill the church Was organised by Joseph Smith the Prophet then I Was Babtised by the Hands of Oliver Cowdery.”⁸¹

The place of these baptisms was no doubt Crooked Brook (now Hathaway Creek), a stream in the northwest corner of the township of Manchester. Crooked Brook ran north past the

⁷⁸ Joseph Knight “Reminiscences,” circa 1835–1847, LDS Church History Library. The revelation Knight refers to became chapter 22 in the Book of Commandments, and includes the date April 6, 1830.

⁷⁹ Statement by C. R. Stafford, March 1885, in *Naked Truths About Mormonism* (Oakland, California) 1, no. 1 (January 1888): 3, original publication in the Yale University Library, New Haven, Connecticut. Mrs. Rockwell’s daughter Caroline Rockwell Smith (1812–87), baptized June 9, 1830, said, “My mother was one of the first Mormon converts.” “Mrs. M. C. R. Smith’s Statement,” March 25, 1885, *Ibid.*, 1, no. 2 (April 1888): 1.

⁸⁰ Benjamin Saunders, interview by William H. Kelley, circa September 1884, Community of Christ Library-Archives.

⁸¹ Testimony of Martin Harris in the Salt Lake Tabernacle, September 4, 1870, Edward Stevenson Collection, LDS Church History Library. Harris was baptized on April 6, 1830.

Smith residence toward Palmyra. Joseph Knight described it as a “Small Stream,” which it still is.⁸² According to a later newspaper account, the stream,

not more than si[x]ty feet from the highway, is the first Mormon Jordan, a little creek which the Smith boys dammed at Joe’s request and made a pool in which the first converts to Mormonism were baptized. It is a sing[i]n[g] meandering little brooklet about ten or fifte[e]n feet wide, with two or three feet of water standing in pools in the bends of the stream, but ordinarily the water is but a few inches deep.⁸³

A history of Ontario County describes the stream in terms congruent with the accounts of those who claimed to be present at the church’s organization: “Crooked brook, of Mormon fame, runs through the northwest part of the town[ship of Manchester], and it was in the waters of this stream that the Mormons baptized their early saints. Dr. [John] Stafford, an old resident of the village of Manchester, was present at the first baptism.”⁸⁴ John Stafford (1805–1905), oldest son of William Stafford, “knew the Smith family well, and was present at the first baptism, when old Granny Smith and Sally Rockwell” were baptized.⁸⁵

July 5, 1830 Manchester Assessment Record and August 1830 US Census

The Assessment Record for the purpose of taxes to be paid on land for lot no. 1 included Roswell Nichols, 100 acres; Joseph Capron, 5 acres; Hiram Smith, 15 acres; Edmund Chase, 29 acres; Amos Risley, 28 acres and Thomas Phillips, 60 acres. South of this lot was lot no. 3 with Squire Stoddard being taxed for land totaling 101 acres, which included land to the east on lot no. 2; James Kinley taxed for 75 acres also on lot no. 3 and for the next lot south on lot no. 5 David Stafford was taxed for 20 acres.⁸⁶

The name “Joseph Smith” is listed twice under “Names of Heads of Families” in the 1830 US Census for Ontario County, enumerated in August 1830. One man was enumerated as residing in Farmington and the other in Manchester. Checking the ages, the Manchester one is our Joseph Smith being two families living together. The names of the Smith family members are included in parenthesis in the appropriate age brackets printed on the census page.

The male members were: 10–15, one (Don Carlos); 15–20, one (William); 20–30, two (Hyrum and Samuel Harrison); and 50–60, one (Joseph Sr., husband of Lucy). Female members were: under 5, two (Lovina and Mary, daughters of Jerusha and Hyrum); 5–10, one (Lucy,

⁸² Joseph Knight “Reminiscences,” circa 1835–1847, LDS Church History Library.

⁸³ “Mormon Leaders at Their Mecca,” *New York Herald*, June 25, 1893.

⁸⁴ John H. Pratt, in Charles F. Milliken’s *A History of Ontario County, New York and Its People* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Co., 1911), 1:418.

⁸⁵ “Celebrated His Ninety-ninth Birthday,” *Shortsville Enterprise* (Shortsville, New York) 22, no. 12 (March 18, 1904): 2.

⁸⁶ “Assessment Roll, of the Real and Personal Estate in the Town of Manchester in the County of Ontario,” July 5, 1830, Ontario County Historical Society Museum and Research Library, Canandaigua.

daughter of Lucy and Joseph Sr.); 20–30, one (Jerusha, wife of Hyrum); 30–40, one (female visitor not identified); and 50–60, one (Lucy, wife of Joseph Sr.).

The Smith household was living among known Manchester neighbors such as Pardon Butts, Abraham Fish, Orren [Orin] Rockwell, Roswell Nichols, Russel[l] Stoddard, David Stafford, Squire Stoddard, Joseph Caperin [Capron], James Kinley, Phebe Chase, Amos Risley, Thomas Phillips, and other members of the Stafford family.⁸⁷

Visitors to Smiths Manchester Log Home

As the message spread, Almira Mack (1805–86), daughter of Lucy Mack Smith’s brother Stephen Mack, came from Pontiac, Michigan, in June 1830, and arrived at the Smith home in Manchester. Lucy said Almira “received the Gospel” and was baptized.⁸⁸ In August 1830, Hyrum was visited by Parley P. Pratt (1807–57), who recalled:

I accordingly visited the village of Palmyra, and inquired for the residence of Mr. Joseph Smith. I found it some two or three miles from the village. As I approached the house at the close of the day I overtook a man who was driving some cows, and inquired of him for Mr. Joseph Smith, the translator of the “Book of Mormon.” He informed me that he now resided in Pennsylvania; some one hundred miles distant. I inquired for his father, or for any of the family. He told me that his father had gone [on] a journey; but that his residence was a small house just before me; and, said he, I am his brother. It was Mr. Hyrum Smith. . . . He welcomed me to his house.⁸⁹

That month Pratt returned and visited the branch in Fayette and was baptized about September 1 by Oliver Cowdery. The next month Parley Pratt again visited Manchester. He wrote:

Returning to western New York the same autumn, I saw for the first time Joseph Smith, the Prophet, at his father’s house, in Manchester; heard him preach, and preached in his house, at the close of which meeting we baptized seven persons. After this he [Joseph Jr.] enquired of the Lord and received a revelation appointing me a mission to the west, in company with Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer, jun., and Ziba Peterson. We started this mission in October, 1830.⁹⁰

Ezra Thayer (1791–1862) visited the Smith home and also heard the preaching of Hyrum Smith. What follows are excerpts from his account:

⁸⁷ 1830 US Census, Manchester, Ontario County, New York, 169–70.

⁸⁸ Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 478, 840.

⁸⁹ Parley P. Pratt [Jr.], ed., *The Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt* (New York: Published for the Editor and Proprietor by Russell Brothers, 1874), 38–39; (1994 ed.), 20, emphasis omitted.

⁹⁰ “History of Parley P. Pratt,” *Deseret News* 8 (May 19, 1858): 53.

I had a half brother living with me and a nephew, and they took my horses and went to meeting, to hear Hyrum [Smith] preach while I was gone. . . . My half brother said that Hyrum said that Joseph had seen an angel. My nephew said that there was something in it, and that I had better go and hear him.... The next Sunday I went and there was a large concourse of people around his father's house, so that they extended to the road, filling up the large lot. I rushed in and got close to the stand, so as to be particular to hear what was said. When Hyrum began to speak, every word touched me to the inmost soul.

Joseph was then in Harmony, Pa., and the next Sunday he came to his father's house, and we assembled to see him.... He then asked me what hindered me from going into the water, as Oliver Cowdery's mother was going to be baptized.... Then we started to the water.... We were baptized just below the mill. ... Parley P. Pratt baptized us⁹¹

Those baptized at this time included Ezra Thayer, Northrop Sweet and Oliver Cowdery's step mother Keziah Cowdery. Apparently they were baptized on Sunday, October 17, 1830.

Revelation for Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson

Two additional missionaries, Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson (ca. 1810–49) were called to preach to the Native Americans, Book of Mormon “Lamanites.” They traveled to Kirtland, Ohio, being there on October 29, 1830, and arrived at their destination at Independence, Jackson County, Missouri in January 1831.

Revelation to Parley Pratt to go to th[e] wilderness

And now concerning my servant Parley [P. Pratt] behold I say unto him that as I live I will that he shall declare my gospel and Learn of me and be meek and lowly of heart and that which I have appointed unto him is that he shall go with my servant Oliver [Cowdery] and Peter [Whitmer Jr.] into the wilderness among the Lamanites and Ziba [Peterson] also shall go with them and I myself will go with them and be in their midst and I am their advocate with the Father and nothing shall prevail and they shall give heed to that which is writ[t]en and pretend to no other revelation and they shall pray always that I may unfold them to their understanding and they shall give heed unto these words and trifle not and I will bless them amen
Manchester Oct 1830 ⁹²

⁹¹ “Testimony of Brother E. Thayer,” *True Latter Day Saints' Herald* (Cincinnati, Ohio) 3, no. 4 (October 1862): 79–83.

⁹² Robin Scott Jensen, et al., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 582–85. This revelation was copied into the manuscript Kirtland Revelations Book. It is included in LDS D&C 32; RLDS D&C 31. The revelation was not copied into the BCR and therefore not printed in the Book of Commandments.

Missionary Covenant

MANCHESTER, Oct. 17, 1830.

I, Oliver, being commanded of the Lord God, to go forth unto the Lamanites, to proclaim glad tidings of great joy unto them, by presenting unto them the fullness of the Gospel, of the only begotten son of God; and also, to rear up a pillar as a witness where the Temple of God shall be built, in the glorious New-Jerusalem; and having certain brothers with me, who are called of God to assist me, whose names are Parley, Peter and Ziba, do therefore most solemnly covenant with God, that I will walk humbly before him, and do this business, and this glorious work according as he shall direct me by the Holy Ghost; ever praying for mine and their prosperity, and deliverance from bonds, and from imprisonment, and whatsoever may befall us, with all patience and faith.--Amen.

OLIVER COWDERY.

We, the undersigned, being called and commanded of the Lord God, to accompany our Brother Oliver Cowdery, to go to the Lamanites, and to assist in the above mentioned glorious work and business. We do, therefore, most solemnly covenant before God, that we will assist him faithfully in this thing, by giving heed unto all his words and advice, which is, or shall be given him by the spirit of truth, ever praying with all prayer and supplication, for our and his prosperity, and our deliverance from bonds, and imprisonments, and whatsoever may come upon us, with all patience and faith.--Amen.

Signed in presence of
JOSEPH SMITH, Jun.
DAVID WHITMER.
P. P. PRATT.
ZIBA PETERSON.
PETER WHITMER.⁹³

The ending of the covenant was evidently signed by the three missionaries in the presence of Joseph Smith Jr. and David Whitmer.

Fayette Happenings

David Marks (1805–45), a Free-will Baptist evangelist, visited the Peter Whitmer Sr. (1773–1854) home on March 29, 1830. He wrote shortly after his visit, “we went to Fayette & held one meeting.”⁹⁴ Marks expanded his journal entry in an account of his life:

Sabbath, March 28, I preached twice to a small assembly in Geneva. Next day, we attended a meeting in Fayette, and tarried at the house of Mr. Whitmer. Here we

⁹³ Ezra Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, November 29, 1831, Letter No. 8, in “Mormonism,” *Ohio Star* (Ravenna, Ohio) 2 (December 8, 1831): 1; reprinted in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 213–14.

⁹⁴ “Journal of D. Marks, Jun. No. 12,” *Morning Star* (Limerick, Maine) 4, no. 52 (April 28, 1830): 1.

saw two or three of his sons, and others to the number of eight, who said they were witnesses of a certain book just published, called the “*Golden Bible*,” or “*Book of Mormon*.”⁹⁵

Two years later he also explained his visit:

On the 25th [sic] of March, 1830, I preached in Fayette and tarried the night at Mr Whitmer’s, where I had an interview with eight of the witnesses. Among the number were a brother of Joseph Smith and Oliver Powdery [sic; Cowdery], the scribe. They had just received a few copies of the book of Mormon from the press. I inquired for the original plates, but they said they were “hid up unto the Lord.”⁹⁶

David Whitmer’s *Address to All Believers in Christ*

In 1887 David Whitmer published his current beliefs regarding if a church organization was needed in 1830. He said there were three branches of the church at the time:

Now, when April 6, 1830, had come, we had then established three branches of the “Church of Christ,” in which three branches were about seventy members: One branch was at Fayette, N.Y.; one at Manchester, N.Y., and one at Colesville, Pa. [New York] ... we met at my father’s house in Fayette, N.Y., on April 6, 1830, to attend to this matter of organizing according to the laws of the land⁹⁷

The idea that the Church of Christ (known in its various sects as Mormonism) was established in Fayette has the problem of travel between Fayette and Manchester (a twenty-five-mile one-way trip). The revelation about ordaining Joseph Smith Jr. in this case would be received in Fayette. If this were the case then individuals would have to travel to Manchester for baptism. If the baptisms occurred in Manchester then the group would travel to Fayette for the organization meeting. Since the baptisms were performed in Manchester there was no need to travel to Fayette on April 6, 1830.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ *The Life of David Marks* (Limerick, ME: Printed at the Office of the Morning Star, 1831), 340, emphasis retained.

⁹⁶ D[avid]. Marks, “For the Morning Star,” *Morning Star* 7, no. 45 (March 7, 1833): 177.

⁹⁷ David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, MO: David Whitmer, 1887), 33. For additional information see H. Michael Marquardt, “David Whitmer: His Evolving Beliefs and Recollections,” in Newell G. Bringhurst and John C. Hamer, eds. *Scattering of the Saints: Schism within Mormonism* (Independence, MO: John Whitmer Books, 2007), 70–72.

⁹⁸ Mark A. Scherer has concluded Manchester as the organization location. *The Journey of a People: The Era of Restoration, 1820 to 1844* (Independence, MO: Community of Christ Seminary Press, 2013), 124–37.

Church at Fayette, Seneca County, New York and the First Church Conference, June 9, 1830

The 1839 manuscript history includes a list of those who were baptized in the months of April and May 1830. The dates of Sunday, April 11, April 18 and the last week in May contain the names of individuals who received the rite of baptism.

The first conference held by the newly formed church was at the Peter Whitmer Sr. home in Fayette, on Wednesday, June 9. The extant licenses certifying ordination, issued at the conference, mention the church organization and date, but include no location.

There were four individuals from the Fayette area and seven believers who traveled to the conference from Manchester that were baptized. Those from Manchester came from the two Smith families: Jerusha (wife of Hyrum); Catherine, William, and Don Carlos (daughter and sons of Lucy and Joseph Sr.) and from the Rockwell family: Porter, Caroline, and Electa (son and daughters of Sarah and Orin). The names may have come from a membership list.⁹⁹ The officiators of early baptisms included Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer.

Church at Colesville, Broome County, New York

At the end of June about 13 or 14 individuals, including Emma Smith, were baptized. They were not confirmed until a later date. When Joseph Smith was planning on administering the Lord's Supper he said he received a message from an angel:

BCR: A Revelation to the Church given at Harmony susquehannh [Susquehanna] County State of Pennsylvania given to Joseph the Seer at a time that he went to purchase wine for Sacrament & he was stop[p]ed by an Angel & he spok[e] to him as follows Saying

Book of Commandments, chapter 28:

A Commandment to the church of Christ, given in Harmony, Pennsylvania, September 4, 1830.

BCR: Listen to the voice of Jesus Christ your Lord your God & your Redeemer whose word is quick & powerful for Behold I say unto you that it mattereth not what ye shall eat or what ye shall drink when ye partake of the sacrament if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory Remembering unto the father my Body which was laid down for you & my blood which was shed for the Remission of your sins

Wherefore a commandment I give unto you that ye shall not Purchase Wine neither strong drink of your enemies Wherefore ye shall partake of none except it is made new among you yea in this my Father[']s Kingdom which shall be built up on the earth Behold this is wisdom in me Wherefore marvel not for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the Vine with you on the Earth & with

⁹⁹ The names of those baptized are in Manuscript History Book A-1:39, 42, LDS Church History Library. The history has the date of the first conference as "the first day of June 1830" rather than the correct date of June 9.

all those whom my father hath given me out of the world Wherefore lift up your hearts & rejoice & Gird up your loins & be faithful untill I come even so amen¹⁰⁰

Soon after this commandment was given, Joseph Smith returned to Colesville to confirm those baptized in June who had not yet received confirmation. Afterwards he and Emma Smith went to Fayette to live with the Whitmer family.

Joseph Smith Sr. in Ontario County Jail

Joseph Sr. was taken to the jail in Canandaigua for a debt and was there with prisoner Eli Bruce (1793–1852), who recorded for November 5, 1830:

Had a long talk with the father of *the Smith*, (Joseph Smith,) who, according to the old man's account, is the particular favorite of Heaven! To him Heaven has vouchsafed to reveal its mysteries; he is the herald of the latter-day glory. The old man avers that he is commissioned by God to baptize and preach this new doctrine. He says that our Bible is much abridged and deficient; that soon the Divine will is to be made known to all, as written in the *new Bible, or Book of Mormon*.¹⁰¹

Epilogue

By presenting historical documentation for the town of Manchester we have a better understanding of some of the activities that occurred relating to the Joseph Smith Sr. family. We get to appreciate the struggles of this unusual family in the context of their time. The Smiths lived within their cultural setting that included belief in the supernatural. This helps explain the use of a stone that had special qualities.

The role of Joseph Smith Jr. as “prophet and seer” is important to Mormonism. This new religious tradition is understandable when the events are known about Smith's various experiences growing up in Manchester, Ontario County, New York. The church he founded was organized at this location. The revelatory messages that Smith proclaimed at Manchester have been presented and can be appreciated in the environmental setting of western New York.

¹⁰⁰ Robin Scott Jensen, et al., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, 40–43, compare with LDS D&C 27; RLDS D&C 26.

¹⁰¹ Robert Morris, *The Masonic Martyr: The Biography of Eli Bruce, Sheriff of Niagara County, New York* (Louisville, KY: Morris and Monsarrat, 1861), 266–67, emphasis retained. Bruce's journal is not extant.

Secular and Religious Background¹⁰²

Joseph Smith Jr.'s formal education was limited and sporadic. He received some of his earliest instruction from his parents. His mother, Lucy, explained that her children had been "deprived of school," but that after her family moved from the hills of Vermont to Lebanon, New Hampshire, in 1811, those children "who were old enough attended a school near by."¹⁰³

After the family moved to western New York, Joseph Jr. apparently attended school in the Palmyra area. According to his own account, schooling was irregular because of economic pressures on the family: "as it required the exertions of all that were able to render any assistance for the support of the Family therefore we were deprived of the bennifit of an education. Suffice it to say I was mearly instructid in reading, writing and the ground <rules> of Arithmatic which const[it]uted my whole literary acquirements."¹⁰⁴

Young Joseph owned a book on arithmetic titled *First Lines in Arithmetic, for the Use of Young Scholars* published in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1818. His name appears in the book: "Joseph Smiths Book[,] January 31st, 1818" also the name of his sister Catherine.¹⁰⁵ At a later date Joseph Smith owned *Sacred Geography or a Description of the Places Mentioned in the Old and New Testament* by Thomas T. Smiley. This twelve-page booklet was intended to promote knowledge of the Holy Scriptures and contained three maps of the Holy Land.¹⁰⁶

Isaac Butts attended school with Smith in the Palmyra area,¹⁰⁷ as did Christopher M. Stafford, who remembered Joseph as "a dull scholar."¹⁰⁸ William Stafford's son, John Stafford, recalled, "Joe was quite illiterate. After they began to have school at their house, he improved

¹⁰² This chapter was published in *The Rise of Mormonism*.

¹⁰³ Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 300. Joseph Jr. would have been about six years old at the time.

¹⁰⁴ Joseph Smith, "A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.," (1832) MS, 1, CHL; Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Autobiographical and Historical Writings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1:5. Orson Pratt wrote in 1840: "He could read without much difficulty, and write with a very imperfect hand; and had a very limited understanding of the ground rules of arithmetic." *Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions* (Edinburgh: Printed by Ballantyne and Hughes, 1840), 3.

¹⁰⁵ Photocopy of one of the cover pages in the Wilford C. Wood Collection, Wilford C. Wood Museum, Bountiful, Utah.

¹⁰⁶ Published in Philadelphia and printed for the author by W. P. Bason, Charleston, South Carolina, 1824, in Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri, cited hereafter CCLA. The names "Joseph Smith Jr" and "M J Whitehead" are written in the booklet.

¹⁰⁷ Statement of Isaac Butt, in *Naked Truths about Mormonism* 1 (Jan. 1888):2, original publication in the Yale University Library.

¹⁰⁸ Statement of C. M. Stafford, *ibid.*, 1 (April 1888):1. For a listing of books in the Manchester Rental Library, see Robert Paul, "Joseph Smith and the Manchester (New York) Library," *Brigham Young University Studies* 22 (Summer 1982):333-56.

greatly. . . . [T]hey had school in their house, and studied the Bible."¹⁰⁹ Young Joseph most likely received some training from his father who at one time had been a school teacher.¹¹⁰

Another young boy who attending school with Joseph Jr. was Peter S. Morrison. Morrison lived a short time in the Joseph Sr. family home and recalled, "I went to school in school session with Joseph and Hyrum Smith. I well remember that Joseph was considered somewhat of a dull pupil—that is, whenever he took up a book to study he would soon forget all about it and go off into absent-mindedness."¹¹¹

Joseph Jr.'s lack of formal schooling sometimes yielded the erroneous impression that he was illiterate. In the latter part of 1825 while Smith was working in northern Pennsylvania, Isaac Hale, his future father-in-law, remarked that he was "not very well educated."¹¹² Perhaps in response to such impressions, Smith, though almost twenty years old, enrolled in school in the Bainbridge, New York area while he was working for Josiah Stowell during the winter of 1825-26. While being examined before Justice Albert Neely on March 20, 1826, Smith testified that he had been "going to school."¹¹³

Other accounts confirm this. Stowell's son Josiah remembered Joseph as "about 20 years old or there about. I also went to Schoal [School] with him one winter."¹¹⁴ Asa B. Searles reported that he was a fellow student with Joseph in Bainbridge when his brother, Lemuel Searles, was a teacher there.¹¹⁵ Local tradition holds that "Smith, while here, attended school in District No. 9."¹¹⁶

With opportunities for formal education limited, the Smith family, like others on the frontier, relied on other avenues of instruction and information. One source of wide-ranging information was the newspaper, which the Smiths received weekly in Palmyra. Orsamus Turner, who served a five-year printer's apprenticeship in Palmyra between 1818 and 1822, recalled that young Joseph came to the village to pick up his father's newspaper:

¹⁰⁹ *Saints' Herald* 28 (June 1, 1881):167. This material comes from the notes of the interviewer, William Kelley. His notes about John Stafford are "Joe was quite illit- [illiterate] until after they began to have school at their house - they had school at their house. and studied their Bible." William H. Kelley Papers, CCLA).

¹¹⁰ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 294, 299.

¹¹¹ "Founder of Church Known by Visitor," *Salt Lake City Herald*, December 31, 1912.

¹¹² *The Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 (May 1, 1834):1; also E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville [Ohio]: Author, 1834), 263.

¹¹³ Charles Marshall, "The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City," *Fraser's Magazine* 7 (February 1873):229.

¹¹⁴ Josiah Stowell, Jr., to John S. Fullmer, February 17, 1843, CHL. See Mark Ashurst-McGee, "The Josiah Stowell Jr.—John S. Fullmer Correspondence," *Brigham Young University Studies* 38, no. 3 (1999):108, 113; and Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 4:80.

¹¹⁵ *History of Lee County [Illinois]* (Chicago: H. H. Hill and Company, Publishers, 1881), 397. Searles "had many a wrestle [with Joseph]; but young Smith was a large, strong fellow and could handle any of the boys."

¹¹⁶ James H. Smith, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties, New York* (Syracuse, NY: D. Mason & Co., 1880), 154.

He used to come into the village of Palmyra with little jags of wood, from his backwoods home; sometimes patronizing a village grocery too freely; sometimes find an odd job to do about the store of Seymour Scovell; and once a week he would stroll into the office of the old Palmyra Register, for his father's paper.¹¹⁷

After they moved to their Manchester farm, the Smith family received the *Wayne Sentinel*, a successor to the *Register* and the *Herald*. A notice giving the subscription cost and the published amount of Joseph Sr.'s delinquent bill suggest that the Smiths received the paper for more than two years. The *Sentinel* cost \$2.00 per year if picked up at the office. The August 11, 1826, issue listed "Joseph Smith" among the delinquent subscribers with the amount due \$5.60.¹¹⁸

Certainly, the Smith family made use of this newspaper. In September 1824 Joseph Sr. placed an advertisement in the *Sentinel* which ran for six weeks. The advertisement concerned a rumor that his oldest son Alvin's buried remains had been disturbed:

To the Public. Whereas reports have been industriously put in circulation, that my son *Alvin* had been removed from the place of his interment and dissected, which reports, every person possessed of human sensibility must know, are peculiarly calculated to harrow up the mind of a parent and deeply wound the feelings of relations—therefore, for the purpose of ascertaining the truth of such reports, I, with some of my neighbors, this morning repaired to the grave, and removing the earth, found the body which had not been disturbed.

This method is taken for the purpose of satisfying the minds of those who may have heard the report, and of informing those who have put it in circulation, that it is earnestly requested they would desist therefrom; and that it is believed by some, that they have been stimulated more by a desire to injure the reputation of certain persons than a philanthropy for the peace and welfare of myself and friends. JOSEPH SMITH.¹¹⁹

The newspaper ran stories on the Hebrew origin of American Indians, a topic subsequently discussed by Joseph Jr. Mordecai M. Noah, a New York City newspaperman, was interested in gathering Jews onto Grand Island, situated in the Niagara River. Noah had embraced this popular theory, and on October 11, 1825, the *Sentinel* reprinted an address detailing his opinion: "Those who are conversant with the public and private economy of the Indians, are strongly of [the] opinion that they are the lineal descendants of the Israelites, and my own researches go far to confirm me in the same belief." He then lists a number of reasons for his belief:

¹¹⁷ O[rasmus]. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase*, 213-14.

¹¹⁸ *Wayne Sentinel* 1 (October 1823):1, and 3 (August 11, 1826):3.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 2 (September 29, 1824):3, emphasis in original. The advertisement is dated September 25, 1824. This notice also appeared in the issues of October 6, 13, 20, 27 and November 3, 1824.

The Indians worship one Supreme Being as the fountain of life, and the author of all creation. Like the Israelites of old, they are divided into tribes. . . . [T]heir language and dialect are evidently of Hebrew origin. They compute time after the manner of the Israelites. . . . They have their prophets, High Priests, and their sanctum sanctorum. . . . They have their towns and cities of refuge.

After concluding his list of evidences, he reflected:

If the tribes could be brought together, could be made sensible of their origin, could be civilized, and restored to their long lost brethren, what joy to our people, what glory to our God, how clearly have the prophecies been fulfilled, how certain our dispersion, how miraculous our preservation, how providential our deliverance.¹²⁰

The newspaper also followed contemporary religious events, which clearly affected young Joseph and his family. The Smiths could have read of the visions and revelations of Asa Wild, a religious seeker like Joseph's uncle Jason Mack.¹²¹ The paper published in 1823 Asa's claim that God told him that in seven years "there would scarce a sinner be found on earth" and "that every denomination of professing christians had become extremely corrupt; many of which never had any true faith at all."¹²²

Wild's claim that existing churches were in error would have found sympathetic ears in the Smith family. Even by the time of young Joseph's birth in 1805, both of his parents had come to rely on personal interpretation of the Bible as the primary guides to religious life. A crucial context for the background and education of young Joseph thus becomes the broader religious questing and experiences of his extended family.

The family of Joseph Sr. originally had ties to the Congregational Church. According to records of the Topsfield, Massachusetts, church, his father, Asael, had been baptized as an infant on March 11, 1744. Nearly twenty-eight years later on March 8, 1772, Asael had three of his children baptized: Jesse (about four years old), Priscilla (about two years old), and Joseph (infant).¹²³ After Asael's family moved to Tunbridge, Vermont, his son Joseph, at the age of twenty-four, was married to Lucy Mack on January 24, 1796, by Seth Austin, a justice of the peace in Tunbridge.¹²⁴

¹²⁰ Ibid., 3 (October 11, 1825):1.

¹²¹ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 230.

¹²² *Wayne Sentinel* 1 (October 22, 1823):4. See Elden J. Watson, "The 'Prognostication' of Asa Wild," *Brigham Young University Studies* 37, no. 3 (1997-98):223-30.

¹²³ George Francis Dow, in section titled: "Baptismal Records of the Church in Topsfield," *The Historical Collections of the Topsfield Historical Society* 1 (Topsfield, Mass.: Published by the Society, 1895, 2d ed.):15, 37-38. See also Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage: Influences of Grandfathers Solomon Mack and Asael Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, Utah: BYU Press, 2003), 246n118, 249n127.

¹²⁴ Tunbridge Town Records, Book A:129, located in the Tunbridge Town Clerk's Office, Tunbridge, Vermont. Lucy mentions that Austin married them, but this was not included in the 1853 printing of her book (Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 258).

A year later Joseph, along with his father and his brother Jesse, professed belief in the doctrine that all people will be saved. They were among the dozen men who on December 6, 1797, stated that they had "formed our Selves into a Society and wish to be known by the Name or forme of universalists." As a result they also informed the town clerk that they did not want "to be Charged with any Tax towards the Support of any teacher of any Diferant Denomination."¹²⁵

Years later Joseph Sr.'s son William remembered that his father's "faith in the universal restoration doctrin[e], however, often brought him in contact with the advocates of the doctrin[e] of endless misrey [misery]." Because of his "belief in the ultimate and final redem[p]tion of all mankind," William claimed it "brought down upon my father the aproblem [opprobrium] or slur of Old Jo Smith."¹²⁶

Although following a different path, Lucy Mack Smith also came to be of independent religious leanings, emphasizing the Bible and personal experience rather than organized religion. While in Tunbridge she attended Methodist meetings. She wrote that she persuaded her husband to attend with her a few times: "But as soon as his Father and brother Jesse heard that we were attending Methodist meeting they were much displeased and his father came to the door one day and threw Tom Pain[e]'s age of reason into the house and angrily bade him read that untill he believed it."¹²⁷ Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, which expounded deism, was widely regarded as an atheistic tract. It taught that true religious knowledge is not revealed or taught by any church but attained by reason and that God, after creating the world according to rational laws, withdrew and no longer interacts with nature or humankind.

Lucy was concerned about her husband's spiritual condition and prayed about him. That night she had a comforting dream in which she saw two trees. She understood that one of the trees was her husband's brother Jesse and the other tree was her husband, who would hear and receive the gospel with his whole heart.¹²⁸ This belief in visions and dreams formed a significant part of the Smith family's religious life.

In 1802 the Smith family, by then Joseph, Lucy, and their two young sons, Alvin and Hyrum, moved from Tunbridge to Randolph, Vermont. At Randolph Lucy became seriously ill. She promised God that she would serve him if she recovered from her illness. "<I> covenanted with God if he would let me live I would endeavor to get that religion that would enable me to serve him right whether it was in the Bible or where ever it might be found even if it was to be obtained from heaven by prayer and Faith."¹²⁹ She prayed to God and heard a voice say, "Seek

¹²⁵ Tunbridge Town Records, Book A:188. See also Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 1:633-34 and Larry C. Porter, *A Study of the Origins of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the States of New York and Pennsylvania* (Provo, Utah: Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Latter-day Saint History and BYU Studies, 2000), 5.

¹²⁶ William Smith, "Notes Written on `Chambers Life of Joseph Smith.' by William Smith," typescript, 18, CHL.

¹²⁷ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 291. The *Age of Reason* incident is not in the Coray finished manuscript.

¹²⁸ *Ibid.*, 292-94.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 277-78. For additional information on the religious background of Joseph and Lucy Smith, see Dan Vogel, *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988), 25-28.

and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you. Let your heart be comforted, ye believe in God, beleive also in me."¹³⁰

Lucy later remembered hearing a Presbyterian give a discourse and afterward she "returned saying in my heart there is not on Earth the religion which I seek, I must again turn to my bible. Taking Jesus and his deciples for an ensample I will try to obtain from God that which man cannot give nor take away."¹³¹ She followed this course for a number of years, later recovered her health, and "found a minister who was willing to baptize me and leave me free from membership in any church."¹³²

Thus by the time of young Joseph's birth his father had embraced the doctrine that all people will be saved, while his mother avoided joining any church, regarding all churches as devoid of "the religion which I seek." Eventually the Smith family moved from Randolph to Sharon, Vermont, where they rented land from Solomon Mack, Lucy's father, and farmed, and "in the winter he [Joseph Sr.] taught school."¹³³ Here their son Joseph was born two days before Christmas on December 23, 1805.

Religion remained an important focus of the Smith family during young Joseph's childhood. In 1811, when he was five years old, his grandfather, Solomon Mack, published *A Narraitve of the Life of Solomon Mack*, an account of his life's experiences and religious conversion.¹³⁴ After its publication, Mack rode on horseback through the surrounding countryside, selling copies of his self-published book. In his narrative, Mack informs readers that until the winter of 1810-11 he gave very little thought to God. In spite of crippling illnesses, he wrote, "I never once thought on the God of my salvation or looked up to him for blessing or protection." He had never read the Bible and "could only recollect some taught parts such as I had heard and laid up for the purpose of ridiculing religious institutions and characters."

But at the age of seventy-six, while incapacitated because of illness, he came under conviction of his sins when he "saw a light about a foot from my face as bright as fire. . . . I thought by this that I had but a few moments to live. . . . I prayed that the Lord would have mercy on my soul and deliver me from this horrible pit of sin." The same appearance of light occurred some nights later, and on another occasion he thought he heard the Lord call him by name. Each time he thought he had but a moment to live.

Finally seeking a sign of his acceptance and pardon by God, he asked to have one night entirely free from pain. He wrote, "And blessed be the Lord, I was entirely free from pain that night." He continued: "And the Lord so shined light into my soul that everything appeared new and beautiful. Oh how I loved my neighbors. How I loved my enemies—I could pray for them.

¹³⁰ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 278. See Matt. 7:7, Luke 11:9, and John 14:1.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 280.

¹³² *Ibid.*, 281.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 299, 294. William Smith wrote about his father, "his occupation in early life was that of a school teacher he was a man well letter[e]d in the common branches of our english studies." "Notes Written on `Chambers Life of Joseph Smith,'" 20.

¹³⁴ Solomon Mack, *A Narraitve of the Life of Solomon Mack, Containing an Account of the Many Severe Accidents He Met With during a Long Series of Years, Together with the Extraordinary Manner in Which He Was Converted to the Christian Faith* (Windsor [Vermont]: Printed at the Expense of the Author [1811]). For the text and dating of this work, see Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage*, 43-73, 201-202n1.

Everything appeared delightful." He found this especially so with regard to the Lord: "The love of Christ is beautiful. There is more satisfaction to be taken in the enjoyment of Christ one day, than in half a century serving our master, the devil."¹³⁵

Young Joseph's grandfather was not the only one to tell of seeing lights and encountering God in dreams. At about the same time, his father, according to his mother's later recollections, was having similar experiences: "My husband's mind became much excited upon the subject of religion; yet he would not subscribe to any particular system of faith, but contended for the ancient order, as established by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and his Apostles."¹³⁶

In April 1811, a month after William was born, Joseph Sr. had what Lucy termed his first vision. In this vision he saw a field and the attendant spirit said, "this field is the world which lies ina[n]imate & dumb as to the things pertaining to the true religion or the order of Heavenly things; all is darkness."¹³⁷ As the result of this vision, he, like his wife Lucy, came to the opinion that all churches were in darkness. Lucy wrote that her husband "seemed more confirmed than ever, in the opinion that there was no order or class of religionists that knew any more concerning the Kingdom of God, than those of the world, or such as made no profession of religion whatever."¹³⁸

Joseph Sr. had other visions intermittently during young Joseph's childhood. In May 1818 his father had his sixth vision. In this vision he saw himself on judgment day traveling toward "the meeting house" upon which crowds of people were converging. He was told he had arrived too late and the door was shut. "I soon felt that I was perishing and began to pray but my flesh continued to wither on my bones." An angel appeared and asked him if he had done everything necessary to be admitted. The messenger reminded him, "Justice must have its demands and then mercy <has its> claims." Upon hearing this, it entered his mind "to ask God in the name of Jesus and I cried out in the agony of my soul, Oh, Lord, I beseech Thee in the name of Jesus Christ to forgive my sins. I then felt strengthened and My flesh began to be restored. The angel then said, you must plead the merits of Jesus for he is an advocate with [the] Father and a mediator between God and man. I now was made quite whole, and the door was opened and upon entering I awoke."¹³⁹

Perhaps as the result of such visions, Joseph Sr. seems to have consistently avoided organized religion. After he attended one meeting during the 1824-25 revival, Lucy remembered her husband refused to attend further meetings.¹⁴⁰

William recalled that his father had morning and evening prayers: "I well remember father used to carry his spectacles in his vest pocked [pocket] . . . and when us boys saw him feel for his specks, we knew that was a signal to get ready for prayer."¹⁴¹ William told about his father's instructions to the family:

¹³⁵ Solomon Mack, *A Narratve of the Life of Solomon Mack*, 11, 20, 22-24.

¹³⁶ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 294.

¹³⁷ Lucy Mack Smith, manuscript draft. Variant reading in Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 295.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 296.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*, 324-25.

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 358.

¹⁴¹ *Zion's Ensign* 5 (January 13, 1894):6; *Deseret Evening News* 27 (January 20, 1894); and *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 56 (February 26, 1894):133.

My father's religious customs often become earksome or tiresome to me, while in my younger days as I made no profession of Christ[i]anity. Still I was called upon to listen to pray[e]rs boath night and morning. My father's favourit evening humn runs thus:

The day is past and gone
The evening shades appear
O may we all remember well
The night of death draws near.

Again and again this was hymn sung while upon the bending knees. My parents, father and mother, pour[e]d out their souls to God the doner of all blessings, to keep and g[u]ard their children and keep them from sin and from all evil works.¹⁴²

In 1834 Joseph Sr. told of his efforts to provide a religious education for his children, emphasizing the comfort he found in his visionary experiences:

I have not always set that example before my family that I ought: I have not been diligent in teaching them the commandments of the Lord, but have rather manifested a light and trifling mind: But in all this I have never denied the Lord. Notwithstanding all this my folly, which has been a cause of grief to my family, the Lord has often visited me in visions and in dreams, and has brought me, with my family, through many afflictions, and I this day thank his holy name.¹⁴³

The Smith family was not unique in this emphasis on visionary experience as the basis of enlightenment.¹⁴⁴ This was evidence of the working of the Holy Spirit of God in the life of the individual and a prominent part of the revivalistic religious experience. The assurance of forgiveness often came in the form of a vision.

This visionary forgiveness came to youthful seekers as well as more mature ones. In 1816 Elias Smith (no relation), a clergyman and journalist, published his account of a very similar experience. For some time as a youth in his early teens he felt a deep sense of being lost:

My mind was greatly distressed by considering myself a sinner, justly condemned to die. . . . Every wrong ever committed, whether in thought, word, or deed, appeared before me, and things which before appeared small, now rose like mountains between me and my Creator. It appeared to me that I was a criminal

¹⁴² William Smith, "Notes Written on `Chambers Life of Joseph Smith,'" 18. The hymn, written by John Leland, a Baptist minister, was published in the first LDS hymnal. See *A Collection of Sacred Hymns* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams & Co., 1835 [1836]), 62-63.

¹⁴³ Remarks made by Joseph Smith Sr., on December 9, 1834, and recorded in Patriarchal Blessing Book, 1:1, CHL. See Mark L. McConkie, *The Father of the Prophet: Stories and Insights from the Life of Joseph Smith, Sr.* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993), 75-76.

¹⁴⁴ See for example, Richard L. Bushman, "The Visionary World of Joseph Smith," *Brigham Young University Studies* 37, no. 1 (1997-98):183-204.

brought to the bar, and proved guilty, and deserving death, without one plea in his own behalf.

With such thoughts pressing on his mind, this youth slipped while carrying a piece of timber. He was pinned on the ground next to a log:

While in this situation, a light appeared to shine from heaven, not only into my head, but into my heart. This was something very strange to me, and what I had never experienced before. My mind seemed to rise in that light to the throne of God and the Lamb. . . . The Lamb once slain appeared to my understanding, and while viewing him, I felt such love to him as I never felt to any thing earthly. My mind was calm and at peace with God through the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world. The view of the Lamb on mount Sion gave me joy unspeakable and full of glory.¹⁴⁵

A few years later, Billy Hibbard, a gospel minister, published his spiritual vision. Writing about it in 1825, he described an event that took place about 1782 when he was nearly twelve years old. He saw himself as a helpless, hopeless sinner:

I found to my unspeakable grief and dismay, that I was altogether unholy in my nature; my sins had corrupted every part, so that there was nothing in me that was good; I was a complete sink of sin and iniquity; I looked to see if there was no way to escape, if God could not be just and have mercy on me: but no . . . all my hopes of obtaining mercy and getting to Heaven at last, are gone, and gone forever!

Hibbard continued in this depressing state of guilt for some days, hoping to find pardon for his sins. Then on a Sunday while reading about the sufferings of Christ, he "had an impression to go in secret and pray":

When I came to the place of prayer, had kneeled down, and closed my eyes, with my hands uplifted toward the heavens, I saw Jesus Christ at the right hand of God looking down upon me, and God the Father looking upon him. The look of Jesus on me removed the burden of my sins, while he spoke these words, "Be faithful until death and this shall be thy place of rest."

After thus seeing both the Father and the Son in vision, Hibbard felt the burden of his guilt suddenly lifted:

I never had seen Jesus Christ before, nor heard his voice, nor ever had a sense of his intercession at the right hand of God for me till now; and now I could see the justice of God in shewing mercy to me for the sake of his Son Jesus Christ; and

¹⁴⁵ Elias Smith, *The Life, Conversion, Preaching, Travels, and Sufferings of Elias Smith* (Portsmouth, N. H.: Printed by Beck & Foster, 1816), 1:56, 59.

not only to me, but to all that would come to him forsaking their sins, and believing that his death and suffering were the only satisfactory sacrifice for sin.

Finally he described the ecstasy of the visionary experience:

the love of God in Christ and of Christ in God, so completely overcame me, that I was all in tears, crying, Glory! Glory! Glory! Beholding the glory of God by faith, was a rapturous sight. . . . I opened my eyes therefore, while still on my knees; and behold all nature was praising God. The sun and firmament, the trees, birds, and beasts, all appeared stamped with the glory of God. I leaped from my kneeling posture, clapped my hands, and cried, Glory! Glory! Glory! Heaven and earth is full of thy glory.¹⁴⁶

Another youth, Eleazer Sherman, of Middleborough, Massachusetts, described a similar deliverance from the guilt of sin. On January 10, 1815, at the age of nineteen, he concluded that "misery and despair must be my lot forever":

I sunk down in tears, and sorrow overwhelmed my sinking soul. While in this distress, I heard as it were a soft and pleasant voice saying to me, Behold the Lamb of God, that taketh away the sin of the world: And then was presented to my mental view the dear Saviour, from his birth to his death. He seemed one of the most innocent looking persons ever beheld by mortal eyes.

After appearing on his throne of mercy, the Savior seemed to ask the young man to surrender his life to him. "As soon as I had given up all," he wrote, "I found peace, and the glory of God filled my soul."¹⁴⁷

The seventh and last vision of Joseph Sr. occurred, according to his wife, while he was living in Palmyra in 1819 or 1820.¹⁴⁸ It was about this time that young Joseph would say that he experienced his first vision. The earliest account of that vision survives from 1832 in Joseph Jr.'s own hand. He begins his narration by pointing out that his parents "spared no pains to instructing me in <the> christian religion." He then described his youthful religious questing:

At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously imprest [impressed] with regard to the all important [important] concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul, which led me to searching the scriptures, believeing as I was taught, that they contained the word of God. Thus applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of differant denominations led me to marvel exce[e]dingly, for I discovered that <they did not> adorn their profession by a holy walk and Godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that

¹⁴⁶ B. Hibbard, *Memoirs of the Life and Travels of B. Hibbard* (New York: Printed for and Published by the Author, 1825), 22-24.

¹⁴⁷ Eleazer Sherman, *The Narrative of Eleazer Sherman* (Providence, R. I.: H. H. Brown, 1830), 1:20-21.

¹⁴⁸ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 330.

sacred depository, this was a grief to my Soul. Thus from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart . . . my mind become exce[e]dingly distressed for I become convicted of my sins and by searching the scriptures I found that <mankind> did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and liveing faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament.

However, he continued, "I learned in the scriptures that God was the same yesterday, to day and forever." By observing the wonders of nature, Joseph confirmed for himself "well hath the wise man said <it is a> fool <that> saith in his heart there is no God." Thus by considering both the Bible and creation he concluded: "All, all these bear testimony and bespeak an omnipotant and omnipreasant power, a being who makith Laws and decreeeth and bindeth all things in their bounds, who filleth Eternity, who was and is and will be from all Eternity to Eternity." Thus convinced that the God of the Bible existed, but no denomination any longer taught the New Testament gospel, he continued praying:

I cried unto the Lord for mercy for there was none else to whom I could go and obtain mercy and the Lord heard my cry in the wilderness and while in <the> attitude of calling upon the Lord <in the 16th year of my age> a piller of light above the brightness of the sun at noon day come down from above and rested upon me and I was filled with the spirit of god and the <Lord> opened the heavens upon me and I saw the Lord and he spake unto me saying, Joseph <my son> thy sins are forgiven thee. . . . behold I am the Lord of glory, I was crucified for the world.¹⁴⁹

Several observations can be drawn from this earliest written narration of Smith's teenage religious experience. First, like his mother, he found the Bible a reliable guide and his interpretation of it the only correct one. Second, like his parents before him, he realized that no church any longer had the truth; everyone else had apostatized. Finally, like his parents and many others of that period, he felt a conviction of his sins and found forgiveness through a direct vision of the Savior granting him pardon.

Orsamus Turner, the young apprentice working at the Palmyra *Register* newspaper office, noted young Joseph's presence at a Methodist camp meeting. He recalled that "after catching a spark of Methodism in the camp meeting, away down in the woods, on the Vienna road, he

¹⁴⁹ "A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.," 1-2, CHL, and Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:5-6. In June 1830 there was a brief reference to Joseph's experience of forgiveness recorded in the Book of Commandments: "For, after that it truly was manifested unto this first elder [Joseph Smith], that he had received a remission of his sins, he was entangled again in the vanities of the world" (BC 24:6). Joseph saw this experience in 1832 as his call to start into the ministry. In this 1832 recollection he wrote that he was in his sixteenth year of age (1821) when he received forgiveness.

[Smith] was a very passable exhorter in evening meetings."¹⁵⁰ The reference to "camp meeting" alludes to a campground site used by Methodists at that time. This camp was about a mile outside the village of Palmyra, "away down in the woods" on the road running southeast to Vienna. At this site in 1822, Methodists built their first house of worship.

The Methodist work in Palmyra was still only a "class meeting" on the circuit at this time. It was not until July 3, 1821 that the Methodist Society of Palmyra was incorporated as a church "by the name of the first Methodist Episcopal Church of Palmyra."¹⁵¹ Four days later, on July 7, 1821, Durfee Chase deeded to the Methodist Church his property on Vienna Road.¹⁵² It was not until 1822 that they were able to begin construction of a meeting house.¹⁵³

In the Methodist style of worship, a sermon was preached in which points were drawn from a given text or passage from the Bible. After the message, an exhortation was usually given by another speaker who would reemphasize the points made in the preacher's exposition and plead with the people to take seriously the message they had just heard. The Methodist structure provided for the licensing of official exhorters by the District Conference.¹⁵⁴ However, in more informal situations, such as camp meetings and evening services (where the liturgical format used at the morning worship was dispensed with), even those as young as twelve or thirteen could rise and give exhortations.¹⁵⁵ Since Turner completed his apprenticeship and left Palmyra in the summer of 1822, his words provide a valuable insight into Joseph's religious activities before his seventeenth birthday.

Joseph did not become a licensed exhorter because such persons had to be members in full standing with the denomination. However, Pomeroy Tucker, another early resident of Palmyra, remarked concerning Joseph, "At one time he joined the probationary class of the Methodist church in Palmyra, and made some active demonstrations of engagedness . . . [but] he soon withdrew from the class."¹⁵⁶ Formal church membership would have required Joseph's meeting with the class leader "at least six months on trial."¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁰ O[rsamus]. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase*, 214, 400. See also Calvin N. Smith, "Joseph Smith as a Public Speaker," *Improvement Era* 69 (April 1966):277.

¹⁵¹ See Miscellaneous Records, Book C:385-86, in the County Clerk's Office, Ontario County, Canandaigua.

¹⁵² See Deeds of Ontario County, Book G:345, Ontario County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua.

¹⁵³ See *Palmyra Herald* 2 (June 19, 1822):2.

¹⁵⁴ *The Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church* (New York: J. Emory and B. Waugh, 1828), 28, 43, 45, 64, 74, 80. For background on the Methodist Class, see David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1987). Members of the class were to "bear one another's burdens" (94) and "there was no prerequisite for Methodist membership other than a desire for salvation, the societies were open to all, regardless of their spiritual state" (108).

¹⁵⁵ *Doctrine and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 71.

¹⁵⁶ Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise and Progress of Mormonism*, 18.

¹⁵⁷ *Doctrines and Discipline of the Methodist Episcopal Church*, 80.

Joseph attended a debating club in Palmyra Village, and Orsamus Turner recalled the following:

Joseph had a little ambition; and some very laudable aspirations; the mother's intellect occasionally shone out in him feebly, especially when he used to help us solve some portentous questions of moral or political ethics, in our juvenile debating club, which we moved down to the old red school house on Durfee street, to get rid of the annoyance of critics that used to drop in upon us in the village.¹⁵⁸

Joseph Jr. was involved with the local Methodist class and wrote about his "intimate acquaintance" with persons in different denominations during his youth. By the time he was approaching nineteen, during the 1824-25 revival meetings, he was somewhat partial toward the Methodists but felt little need for organized religion. He later wrote in his 1838-39 account:

During this time of great excitement my mind was called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness; but though my feelings were deep and often poignant, still I kept myself aloof from all these parties, though I attended their several meetings as occasion would permit.¹⁵⁹

His mother recalled, "Joseph never said many words upon any subject but always seemed to reflect more deeply than common persons of his age upon everything of a religious nature."¹⁶⁰

According to his later colleague Oliver Cowdery, Joseph was impressed by the revival preaching of Reverend George Lane. As mentioned in Chapter 2, Lane was the Methodist presiding elder of the Ontario District from July 1824 until January 1825. Cowdery wrote, "Much good instruction was always drawn from his [Lane's] discourses on the scriptures, and in common with others, our brother's [Joseph Smith's] mind became awakened."¹⁶¹ Joseph would have been eighteen years old when he heard Lane preaching.

After the family discussed "the subject of the diversity of churches," Lucy Smith recalled that Joseph saw an angel who revealed to him the gold plates:

After we ceased conversation, he went to bed <and was pondering in his mind which of the churches were the true one> but he had not laid there long till <he

¹⁵⁸ Turner, *History of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase*, 214. This statement by Turner is cited in John Henry Evans, *Joseph Smith, An American Prophet* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), 32. The *Western Farmer* 1 (January 23, 1822):3, Palmyra, contained the following: "NOTICE. The young people of the village of Palmyra and its vicinity are requested to attend a Debating school at the school house near Mr. Billings' on Friday next." Notice dated January 19, 1822.

¹⁵⁹ Manuscript History, Book A-1:2; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:270.

¹⁶⁰ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 335; not in Coray revised manuscript.

¹⁶¹ *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (December 1834):42.

saw> a bright <light> enter the room where he lay. He looked up and saw an angel of the Lord <standing> by him. The angel spoke, I perceive that you are enquiring in your mind which is the true church. There is not a true church on Earth. No, not one, <and> has not been since Peter took the Keys <of the Melchisedec priesthood after the order of God> into the Kingdom of Heaven. The churches that are now upon the Earth are all man made churches.¹⁶²

Lucy Smith later remembered "listening in breathless anxiety to the <religious> teachings" of her son Joseph, "for Joseph was less inclined to the study of books than any child we had but much more given to reflection and deep study."¹⁶³ These teachings would have been the theological expositions resulting from Joseph's deep study expressed within the Smith family.

Joseph Smith's childhood vision, as his 1832 narrative describes, of Christ's appearing and granting him forgiveness for his sins was similar to those of other young people of his day. The later 1838-39 version of his first vision introduces a revival before his vision and creates a chronologically implausible picture.

From what we can learn about the religious background of the Smith family, Joseph Jr.'s parents taught religious values to their children. Though his father did not regularly attend church, he did sing and pray with his family. Joseph's religious instruction included hearing minister's sermons, revival homilies, private family worship, and personal Bible study. Joseph was not uninformed, ignorant, or illiterate.

While the Smith family held Christian beliefs, they also believed in treasures supernaturally buried in the earth which could be obtained only through magical rituals.

¹⁶² Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 335; not in Coray revised manuscript.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, 344.

The Palmyra Revival of 1824-25, From Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Records: Its Impact on the Restoration Movement¹⁶⁴

Introduction

Shortly after the Joseph Smith Sr. family reunited in the town of Palmyra, New York, the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra was incorporated in March 1817.¹⁶⁵ The family eventually made arrangement to purchase about one hundred acres in Farmington (later named Burt and Manchester). The oldest son of the family named Alvin, twenty-five-years-old, worked with Russell Stoddard in building a frame home for his parents, brothers and sisters. Soon after Alvin died.

The Smith family held Christian beliefs and used the Bible in their religious teachings at their home. Joseph Sr. had visionary experiences and avoided organized religion. The elder Smith also believed in treasures supernaturally buried in the earth which could be obtained only through magical rituals.

Palmyra Revival

In Lucy Mack Smith's draft of her history, she relates the family's sorrow after the death of Alvin, who died in November 1823. She said "we could not be comforted because he was not," she adds a short statement, subsequently crossed out: "About this time their [there] was a great revival in religion and the whole neighborhood was very much aroused to the subject and we among the rest flocked to the meeting house to see if their was a word of comfort for us that might relieve [relieve] our over charged feelings."¹⁶⁶ Her history continues:

There was <at this time> a man then laboring in that place to effect a union of all the churches that all denominations might be agreed to worship God with one mind and one heart This I thought looked right and tried to persuade My Husband to join with them as I wished to do so myself and it was the inclination of them all [her children] except Joseph he refused from the first to attend the meeting with us He would say Mother I do not wish to prevent you from going to meeting or joining any church you like or any of the Family who desire the like only do not ask me to go <do so> for I do not wish to go But I will take my Bible and go out

¹⁶⁴ First published in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 40 (Spring/Summer 2020).

¹⁶⁵ Incorporation papers of the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, March 18, 1817, in Miscellaneous Records, Book C:209, Ontario County Clerk's Office, Canandaigua, New York.

¹⁶⁶ Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844-1845, book 4, Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 356-57, Words above the line included in brackets. Another portion crossed out included: "The circumstance of this Death aroused the neighborhood to the subject of religion" (355).

into the woods and learn more in two hours than you could if you were to go to meeting two years

While no date is given in her recollection Lucy Smith placed the “union of all the churches” after Alvin’s death. There were a number of churches holding services in the Palmyra area. There were the Methodist, Presbyterian, Baptist and Quaker. While Methodist held camp meetings in the general area of Palmyra, there was a revival involving Presbyterians during the winter of 1816-17.

Except for the local Baptist Church of Palmyra there are no known list of members who united during the Palmyra revival and excitement of 1824-25. The revival that impacted Palmyra and other towns was just a small part of the Great Awakening in western New York. What follows is a reconstruction of the Palmyra revival among Methodists, Presbyterians and Baptists.

First Methodist Episcopal Church of Palmyra

The membership records of the Methodist Church are not available as they were reported as being destroyed in a fire at Rochester, New York in 1933. Palmyra was on the Ontario circuit within the Ontario district. The local Palmyra newspaper of September 15, 1824 showed the progress of the work of the Methodist Church:

A reformation is going on in this town to a great extent. The love of God has been shed abroad in the hearts of many, and the outpouring of the Spirit seems to have taken a strong hold. About twenty-five have recently obtained a hope in the Lord, and joined the Methodist Church, and many more are desirous of becoming members.¹⁶⁷

In January 1825 a report by Rev. George Lane, presiding elder of the Ontario district, was published in the *Methodist Magazine* of April 1825, concerning the Lord's work in Palmyra and vicinity. It "commenced in the spring, and progressed moderately until the time of the quarterly meeting, which was held on the 25th and 26th of September" 1824. Rev. Lane wrote:

From Catharine [circuit] I went to Ontario circuit, where the Lord had already begun a gracious work in Palmyra. . . . About this time [September 25 and 26, 1824] it appeared to break out afresh. Monday evening, after the quarterly meeting, there were four converted, and on the following evening, at a prayer meeting at Dr. Chase's, there were seven. Among these was a young woman by the name of Lucy Stoddard.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ “Communication,” dated “Palmyra, 11th Sept. 1824,” *Wayne Sentinel* 1 (September 15, 1824):3, Palmyra, New York.

¹⁶⁸ "Revival of Religion on Ontario District," letter of George Lane, January 25, 1825, in *The Methodist Magazine, Designed as a Compend of Useful Knowledge, and of Religious and Missionary Intelligence, for the Year of our Lord 1825, Volume VIII* (New York: Published by N. Bangs and J. Emory, 1825), 8 (April 1825):158-59.

Nineteen-year-old Lucy Stoddard was a cousin of Calvin Stoddard, who would later marry Smith's sister Sophronia.¹⁶⁹ Also noteworthy is that according to Joseph Smith Sr., he heard a rumor that his deceased son Alvin's grave had been disturbed. On September 25 he, along with some neighbors, dug up the body of Alvin and found the rumor to be incorrect.¹⁷⁰ Lane further reported:

December 11th and 12th our quarterly meeting for Ontario circuit was held in Ontario. . . . Here I found that the work which had for some time been going on in Palmyra, had broken out from the village like a mighty flame, and was spreading in every direction. When I left the place, December 22[n]d, there had, in the village and its vicinity, upward of one hundred and fifty joined the [Methodist] society, besides a number that had joined other churches, and many that had joined no church.¹⁷¹

By February 1825 revivals were reported in the neighboring towns of Williamson and Ontario to the north, in Manchester, Sulphur Springs, and Vienna to the southeast, in Lyons to the east, and in Macedon to the west. Even towns at a greater distance from Palmyra began to experience revival fires, with Mendon to the west and Geneva to the southeast sharing in the divine outpouring.

Methodist records give the total membership of the preaching points serviced by a circuit-riding preacher. The increase of 208 reported in the summer of 1825 for the previous year demonstrates that this was a banner year for the Ontario circuit on which Palmyra was located.¹⁷²

Palmyra Presbyterian Church

The first volume of the Palmyra Presbyterian church's minutes has been missing since at least 1898. But the records of the Geneva Presbytery to which the local church belonged are still extant, and these clearly reflect the revival in the congregation at Palmyra. The minutes show that by September 21, 1825, when figures were in for a revival over the winter of 1824-25 "99 have been admitted on examination." As early as February 1825, the Presbytery was called on to

bless the Lord for the displays of sovereign grace which have been made <within our boundaries> during the past year. In the congregation of Palmyra, the Lord has appeared in his glory to build up Zion. More than a hundred have been

¹⁶⁹ Calvin W. Stoddard was baptized on April 3, 1825 (Minutes of the Palmyra Baptist Church, April 3, 1825). Stoddard married Sophronia Smith, who was then a member of the Palmyra Presbyterian Church, on December 30, 1827.

¹⁷⁰ "To the Public," *Wayne Sentinel* 2 (September 29, 1824):3, also in issues of October 6, 13, 20, 27 and November 3, 1824.

¹⁷¹ *Methodist Magazine* 8 (April 1825):160.

¹⁷² *Minutes of the Annual Conferences of the Methodist Episcopal Church for the Years 1773-1828, Volume 1* (New-York: Published by T. Mason and G. Lane, 1840), the report of Ontario district in the Ontario Conference for 1824 was 417 white, 4 color (446) and the membership figure for 1825 was 627 white 2 color (471). (1825).

hopefully brought into the kingdom of the Redeemer. The distinguishing doctrines of grace have proved eminently the sword of the Spirit, by which the rebellion of man's heart has been slain. The fruits of holiness in this revival even now are conspicuous. The exertions for the promotion of divine knowledge are greater than formerly. Sabbath Schools, Bible classes, Missionary & Tract Societies are receiving unusual attention, & their salutary influence is apparent.¹⁷³

The *Religious Advocate*, a Presbyterian publication, printed in Rochester, was cited in the March 2, 1825 issue of the *Wayne Sentinel*:

a revival of religion had taken place in the town[s] of Palmyra, Macedon, Manchester, Phelps, Lyons and Ontario, and that more than 200 souls had become hopeful subjects of Divine Grace, &c. It may be added, that in Palmyra and Macedon, including Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Churches, more than 400 have already testified that the Lord is good. The work is still progressing.¹⁷⁴

James Hotchkin wrote, "a copious shower of grace passed over this region in 1824, under the labors of Mr. Stockton, and a large number were gathered into the church, some of whom are now pillars in Christ's house."¹⁷⁵

Palmyra Baptist Church Records

Membership rolls of "the first Baptized [sic] Church in Palmyra," which had a frame meetinghouse west of the village of Palmyra in Macedon Township, includes the names of those added to the membership record. The awakening began on October 20, 1824, when church minutes show that "Michael Egleston, Erastus Spear, Lorenzo Spear, Abigail Spear, Belena Byxbe, Minerva Titus, Sophia Rogers, and Harriot Rogers told their Christian experience to the Church and were fellowshipped by the Church and on Thursday following were Baptized by Elder Bradley and Received into the Church."

The minutes of November 20 mention eight more individuals baptized; the November 24 minutes name an additional twelve. In December nineteen more were added by conversion. In the first four months of 1825, there were forty-five additional baptisms. For the period from October 1824 to August 1825, there were a total of ninety-four persons were received on

¹⁷³ Geneva Presbytery "Records," September 21, 1825, Book D:40; Geneva Synod "Records," October. 6, 1825, 431, both in the Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. In the Presbytery's Report to Synod, the Palmyra church reported for the year between September 10, 1824, and September 23, 1825, additions of 103 members and a membership jump from seventy-nine to 178 members (130 percent) with forty adult baptisms. See "Presbyterial Reports to the Synod of Geneva," Presbyterian Historical Society. For the quotation, see Geneva Presbytery "Records," February 2, 1825, Book D:27-28.

¹⁷⁴ "Religious," *Wayne Sentinel* 2 (March 2, 1825):3, see also page 4.

¹⁷⁵ James H. Hotchkin, *A History of the Purchase and Settlement of Western New York and of the Rise, Progress, and Present State of the Presbyterian Church in that Section* (New York: Published by M. W. Dodd, 1848), 378.

profession of faith, baptized and fourteen added by letter. The local membership of the church total in 1824 was 132 and in 1825 it was 219, for an increase of 87 for the one-year conference period.¹⁷⁶ The 1824-25 revival received write-ups in publications.¹⁷⁷

Abraham Spear wrote: “<in 1824> A Powerful work of the Holy Spirit took place on the hearts of the impenitent, Saints rejoiced and Sinners trembled Several hundred professed to have passed from death to life and out of the number who professed to have obtained a hope in Christ 118 [sic; 108] were added to the Baptist Church under the ministry of James C Barret and Baruch Beckwith.”¹⁷⁸

Moving the Palmyra Revival

The first Latter Day Saint publication that tells about the Palmyra revival appeared in Oliver Cowdery letters. This was a period of 1834-35 when changes were made for theological and financial purposes. This included changing the name of the church, where the church was organized, and revising the text of about a third of the recorded revelations that Joseph Smith received. Emphasis was placed on priesthood restoration, with a firm foundation of the need for a restored New Testament church. Changing revelatory messages opened the door to changing part of the story of the events in the early life of Joseph Smith Jr.¹⁷⁹

Oliver Cowdery, evidently obtained his information from Joseph Jr., wrote about “a great awaking” and George Lane who visited the area of Palmyra. Rather than putting Lane’s ministry in the latter part of 1824, Cowdery gives the background to 1820 or 1821.

I shall, therefore, pass over that, till I come to the 15th year of his life. It is necessary to premise this account by relating the situation of the public mind relative to religion, at this time: One Mr. Lane, a presiding Elder of the Methodist

¹⁷⁶ "A Book of Records for the First Baptized [sic] Church in Palmyra" (1813-1859), includes minutes for October 16; November 20, 24; December 4, 5, 18, 1824; January 1, 15, 29; February 19; March 5, 19; and April 3, 1825. Original Palmyra Baptist records, American Baptist Historical Society, Atlanta, Georgia. See also *Minutes of the Ontario Baptist Association, Convened at Penfield, on the 28th and 29th of September 1825* (Rochester [N.Y.]: Printed by Everard Peck, 1825), 5.

¹⁷⁷ For example, *New-York Religious Chronicle* 2 (November 20, 1824): 154; 3 (April 9, 1825): 58; *Western New York Baptist Magazine* 4 (February 1825): 284; *Western Recorder* 1 (November 9, 1824): 90; 2 (March 29, 1825): 50; *Boston Recorder* 10 (April 29, 1825): 70; 10 (May 20, 1825): 82; *Baptist Register* (Utica), December 3, 1824; March 11, 1825, 7; *American Baptist*, February 1825; *Zion's Herald* 3 (February 9, May 11, 1825), a Methodist weekly in Boston; *American Baptist Magazine* 5 (April 1825):124-25; and the *New York Observer*, May 7, 1825.

¹⁷⁸ “A brief History of the <Rise and Progress of the> Baptist Church Formerly Palmyra Now Macedon Wayne Co. and state of New York,” 3, reproduced in *First Baptist Church of Macedon, A History of the First Two Hundred Years 1800-2000* (n.p.: Bicentennial Committee of the Church, 2000), 14. Angled brackets <> indicate words written above the line.

¹⁷⁹ H. Michael Marquardt, "Changing Revelatory Messages: A Mormon Example," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 33 (Spring/Summer 2013):122-39.

church, visited Palmyra, and vicinity. Elder Lane was a tallented man possessing a good share of literary endowments, and apparent humility. There was a great awakening, or excitement raised on the subject of religion, and much enquiry for the word of life. Large additions were made to the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches.—Mr. Lane's manner of communication was peculiarly calculated to awaken the intellect of the hearer, and arouse the sinner to look about him for safety—much good instruction was always drawn from his discourses on the scriptures, and in common with others, our brother's mind became awakened. . . . In this general strife for followers, his mother, one sister, and two of his natural brothers, were persuaded to unite with the Presbyterians.¹⁸⁰

Cowdery wrote that Joseph Smith's mother united with the Presbyterians. This would indicate that it is the same event mentioned in Lucy Smith's history about joining a church. In his next letter, printed in February 1835, Cowdery makes what he terms a correction "in the type" of the excitement in Palmyra as having occurred in 1823, off by one year but not as earlier indicated in his December published letter.

You will recollect that I mentioned the time of a religious excitement, in Palmyra and vicinity to have been in the 15th year of our brother J. Smith Jr's, age—that was an error in the type —it should have been in the 17th.—You will please remember this correction as it will be necessary for the full understanding of what will follow in time. This would bring the date down to the year 1823.¹⁸¹

It is not known why this change was made. This according to Oliver Cowdery would bring events to the evening of September 21, 1823.

Names of Smith family members who joined the Palmyra Presbyterian Church

In 1838 and the next year recorded in a record book, the revival was moved to an earlier time period with an emphasis on theology. This history does mention by name members of the Smith family who joined the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra. The following is an extract relating to the excitement:

Sometime in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country, indeed the whole district of Country seemed affected by it and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division among the people, Some crying, "Lo here" and some Lo there. Some were contending for the Methodist faith, Some for the

¹⁸⁰ "Letter III. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (December 1834):42, Kirtland, Ohio.

¹⁸¹ "Letter IV. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (February 1835):78.

Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist . . . I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My Fathers family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith and four of them joined that Church, Namely, My Mother Lucy, My Brothers Hyrum, Samuel Harrison, and my Sister Soph[r]onia. . . . I attended their several meetings as occasion would permit. But in [the] process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect¹⁸²

The fact that the names of Smith's mother and brothers appear later as members of the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, who were dropped for nonattendance, is further evidence that the revival Joseph Smith had in view affected the local Presbyterian Church.¹⁸³ Joseph was a young man eighteen years old in 1824.

Prior to the time of the Palmyra revival Orsamus Turner noted Joseph's presence at a Methodist camp meeting and found him "a very passable exhorter."¹⁸⁴ Smith also attended the local Methodist class, where members were to "bear one another's burdens." But "there was no prerequisite for Methodist membership other than a desire for salvation, the societies were open to all, regardless of their spiritual state."¹⁸⁵ In an 1832 history Joseph Smith does not include the background of a revival in his religious quest. Joseph did mention his "intimate acquaintance with those differant [different] denominations."¹⁸⁶

In his 1838-39 history Smith told about the confusion rather than harmony among the three Christian churches. The history was a theological or faith-oriented account. It was written during a time of persecution. He said this occurred by the spring of 1820. Joseph Smith did not join any of the local churches, "having been forbidden to join any of the religious sects of the day." A forgiveness of sins and the Palmyra revival are two separate events. Placing the revival years earlier served as an indicator in Smith's theological quest to explain, in part, why he did not join a church.

Conclusion

The records of the Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist churches have the dates of the revival in Palmyra and surrounding towns occurring during 1824-25. Oliver Cowdery and the Joseph Smith history give an earlier background to Smith's religious experiences. Churches of the Restoration Movement that refer to the revival usually cite the account published in the *Times and Seasons*.

¹⁸² Manuscript History, Book A-1: 1-2, Church History Library; Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark-Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832-1844* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2012), 208. First printed in "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 15, 1842):727, Nauvoo, Illinois.

¹⁸³ "Records of the Session of the Presbyterian Church in Palmyra," 2:11-12, original located at the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, Palmyra, New York.

¹⁸⁴ O[rsamus]. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase* (Rochester, NY: Published by William Alling, 1851), 214.

¹⁸⁵ For background on the Methodist Class, see David Lowes Watson, *The Early Methodist Class Meeting: Its Origins and Significance* (Nashville, TN: Discipleship Resources, 1987), 94, 108.

¹⁸⁶ Davidson, et al., *Histories, Volume 1*:11-12.

The original placing of a revival before a vision makes this a theological history regarding a religious experience. Topics include confusion over which church to join and persecution for telling about a vision. Historians cannot provide evidence of a religious experience but can tell if it fits a historical context. By moving the historical Palmyra revival mentioned by Lucy Smith, Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith to dates before Alvin Smith's death creates the historical problem.

What occurred as the call of Joseph Smith Jr. has significance to those in the Restoration movement. His story explains what he regarded as important being a religious leader. Spiritual experiences are more significant than historical accuracy. A prophet needs not be a historian.

FIGURE I: *Timeline of the Three Churches in the Palmyra Revival of 1824-25*

METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH	WESTERN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH	BAPTIST CHURCH
<i>Genesee Conference Ontario District Ontario Circuit</i>	<i>Geneva Synod Geneva Presbytery</i>	<i>Ontario Baptist Association</i>
Palmyra	West Palmyra	First Baptized Church in Palmyra
The work started in the spring of 1824		
Sept. 25-28: appeared to break out afresh		
		Oct. 20-21, 1824: awaking began; 8 baptized; Nov 20: 8 baptized; Nov. 25-26: 12 baptized; Dec.: 19 baptized
Dec. 11-12: broke out from The village like a mighty flame		Jan.-Apr. 1825: 44 baptized; May-Aug. 1825: 3 baptized;
208 increase in district (Minutes for 1825)	99 admitted on examination (Sept. 21, 1825)	94 baptized, 14 by letter; Total 108 added names in minutes and also on membership list (Sept. 28-29, 1825)
Palmyra: about 77 (by Jan. 1825)		

*Location of meeting house:
on Vienna Street near the
cemetery, 1822-?*

*Location of Union church:
on Church Street near the
cemetery, 1811-32*

*Location of meeting house:
on Quaker Road near the
cemetery, 1810-35
in Palmyra until 1823,
then in Town of Macedon*

About 270 or more individuals joined the three churches during the revival.

The March 20, 1826 Examination of Joseph Smith

Background

Soon after the Joseph Smith Sr. family arrived in Palmyra, Ontario County, New York, young Joseph Jr. studied the Bible. He had an interest in biblical themes. In 1832 Joseph Smith wrote about the year 1817 or 1818, "At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously imprest [*sic*; impressed] with regard to the all important [*sic*; important] concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul, which led me to searching the scriptures."¹⁸⁷ Joseph Smith Jr. attended school, learned to read, write and learn arithmetic. Though Smith may have had a religious experience of forgiveness of sins it did not cause a change in his treasure-digging activity.

In 1818 the family sharecropped the land of twenty-seven-year-old neighbor Jeremiah Hurlbut. The family eventually made arrangements to purchase about one hundred acres in Farmington. The oldest son of the family, 25-year-old Alvin, worked with Russell Stoddard in building a frame home for his parents, brothers, and sisters. Soon thereafter, Alvin died unexpectedly. The Smith family held Christian beliefs and used the Bible in their religious teachings at home. Joseph Sr. had visionary experiences and avoided organized religion. The elder Smith also believed in treasures buried supernaturally in the earth that could be obtained only through magic rituals.

The possibility of finding buried treasure fascinated many in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century America. Reports of searching for such riches were widespread in the Palmyra area,¹⁸⁸ and extant accounts show that treasure was generally sought through supernatural means. Locations for buried wealth and lost Spanish mines were sometimes located through dreams. Treasures could also be located by using divining rods, often made from "witch hazel," or by looking in special stones or crystals.

In 1821 Farmington was divided to create a new township named Burt, renamed Manchester in April 1822. It appears that the Smith family built their log house, cleared land for planting and made other improvements, leaving their Palmyra residence sometime between June 1822 and July 1823. The one hundred acres of lot 1 was located in the northwest corner of Manchester Township. Joseph Sr.'s assessment for July 24, 1823, was \$300 more than the

¹⁸⁷ "A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.," Joseph Smith Letter book 1:1-2, MS 155, Box 2, Folder 1, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark-Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832-1844* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2012), 11.

¹⁸⁸ Newspaper articles mention unnamed individuals who claimed to have found vast treasures. The *Orleans Advocate* published in Albion, New York, contains the following: "A few days since was discovered in this town, by the help of a mineral stone, (which becomes transparent when placed in a hat and the light excluded by the face of him who looks into it, provided he is fortune's favorite,) a monstrous potash kettle in the bowels of old mother Earth, filled with the purest bullion." Reprinted in *Wayne Sentinel* (Palmyra, New York) 3 (December 27, 1825):2, and the *Livingston Register* (Geneseo, New York), December 28, 1825.

previous year which indicated the work already completed on their new Manchester farm. Palmyra village was where the Smiths did the majority of their business and received letters. In 1823 a newly formed county was formed, placing Palmyra into Wayne County.

The Chase Stone

Joseph Jr., sixteen at the time, worked with his twenty-four-year-old brother Alvin when Willard Chase (also twenty-four) found a stone while digging a well on the Chase property in Manchester. Joseph Jr. said that by looking in Willard Chase's stone he could see hidden treasures, all things in caves, in and under the earth, and spirits in ancient dress in charge of the treasures. Joseph borrowed the stone following his father's search for hidden treasures. Willard Chase stated:

In the year 1822, I was engaged in digging a well. I employed Alvin and Joseph Smith to assist me; the latter of whom is now known as the Mormon prophet. After digging about twenty feet below the surface of the earth, we discovered a singularly appearing stone, which excited my curiosity. I brought it to the top of the well, and as we were examining it, Joseph put it into his hat, and then his face into the top of his hat. It has been said by Smith, that he brought the stone from the well; but this is false. There was no one in the well but myself. The next morning he came to me, and wished to obtain the stone, alledging that he could see in it; but I told him I did not wish to part with it on account of its being a curiosity, but would lend it. After obtaining the stone, he began to publish abroad what wonders he could discover by looking in it, and made so much disturbance among the credulous part of [the] community, that I ordered the stone to be returned to me again. He had it in his possession about two years.¹⁸⁹

Near this time in 1822 Joseph Sr. and Alvin arrange to purchase one-hundred-acre land on Lot 1 in Farmington, Ontario County. Joseph Smith Sr. and some of his neighbors were treasure seekers who would search in the ground for money. It was a shock to the Smith family when Alvin, the oldest son and brother died on November 19, 1823.

When Joseph Jr. was eighteen, almost nineteen years old, a revival of religion occurred that commenced with the Methodists, followed by the Baptists and Presbyterians. Joseph Jr. heard discourses given by Reverend George Lane of the Methodist church and attended meetings. By the Spring of 1825 his mother Lucy, brothers Hyrum and Samuel Harrison, and his sister Sophronia joined the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra.¹⁹⁰

¹⁸⁹ Affidavit of Willard Chase, Manchester, Ontario County, New York, before Justice of the Peace, Frederick Smith, circa December 11, 1833, in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville [Ohio]: Printed and Published by the Author, 1834), 240–41, emphasis omitted. Chase mentioned that he became acquainted with the Smiths in 1820 and “they were engaged in the money digging business” (240).

¹⁹⁰ H. Michael Marquardt, “The Palmyra Revival of 1824-25, From Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Records: Its Impact on the Restoration Movement,” *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 40 (Spring/Summer 2020):39-47.

A cruel rumor circulated that Alvin Smith's buried body had been disturbed. This may have been related because the elder Smith was in the habit of searching for hidden treasures. Joseph Sr. placed a notice in the local newspaper the *Wayne Sentinel*. Joseph Sr. and some associates went to the place where he was buried, dug up the body and found that the rumor was false.¹⁹¹

Shortly afterwards Hyrum Smith borrowed the Chase stone. Willard Chase recalled that Hyrum "wished to borrow the same stone, alledging that they wanted to accomplish some business of importance, which could not very well be done without the aid of the stone." "I thought I could rely on his word at this time, as he had made a profession of religion."¹⁹²

Working with Josiah Stowell

The Smiths knew they needed to make their final payment for their one hundred acres of land. So, when fifty-five-year-old Josiah Stowell Sr. inquired if they had an interest hunting for a gold/silver mine the Smiths were interested. Joseph Jr. traveled with his father from Manchester to southern New York and Harmony (later Oakland), Susquehanna County, Pennsylvania, to obtain money to pay off the mortgage of their Manchester farm. Isaac Hale recalled:

I first became acquainted with JOSEPH SMITH, Jr. in November, 1825. He was at that time in the employ of a set of men who were called "money-diggers;" and his occupation was that of seeing, or pretending to see by means of a stone placed in his hat, and his hat closed over his face. In this way he pretended to discover minerals and hidden treasure. His appearance at this time, was that of a careless young man--not very well educated, and very saucy and insolent to his father. Smith, and his father, with several other 'money-diggers' boarded at my house while they were employed in digging for a mine that they supposed had been opened and worked by the Spaniards, many years since. Young Smith gave the 'money-diggers' great encouragement, at first, but when they had arrived in digging, to near the place where he had stated an immense treasure would be found--he said the enchantment was so powerful that he could not see. They then became discouraged, and soon after dispersed. This took place about the 17th of November, 1825; and one of the company gave me his note for \$12[.]68 for his board, which is still unpaid.¹⁹³

The company of treasure seekers did not locate any mine and no money was obtained. The trip to locate a mine in the fall of 1825 failed and they could not pay off the mortgage. On

¹⁹¹ "To the Public," *Wayne Sentinel* 2, no. 1 (September 29, 1824):3. The advertisement is dated September 25, 1824. The notice also appeared in the issues of October 6, 13, 20, 27 and November 3, 1824.

¹⁹² Willard Chase in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 241.

¹⁹³ Statement of Isaac Hale, March 20, 1834 in "Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* (Montrose, Pennsylvania) 9 (May 1, 1834):1. Reprinted in *The New York Baptist Register* (Utica, New York) 11 (June 13, 1834); and E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 262-63.

December 20, 1825, Lemuel Durfee Sr. purchased their farm for a total of \$1,135 and let them remain on the land and in the frame house where they lived. From about October 1825 to March 1826 Joseph Jr. worked for Josiah Stowell for five months and attended school. It was at the home of Elizabeth and Isaac Hale in Harmony where Joseph Jr. met their daughter Emma.

Published Examination

Over forty-five years later three different published versions of the March 20, 1826 court record became available. The handwritten record is not extant to compare why some wording in the printings are different. It is clear from a comparison with the first printing of the official record that neither account borrowed from the other. There was no mention of the name of the justice of the peace in the proceedings.

Charles Marshall, "The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City," *Fraser's Magazine* (London) 7 (February 1873): 225-35; reprinted in Frazer's article in *Eclectic Magazine* (New York) 17 (April 1873): 479-88)

Daniel S. Tuttle, "Mormons," *A Religious Encyclopaedia*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: Funk & Wagnalls, 1883), 2:1,576

"A Document Discovered," *Utah Christian Advocate* (Salt Lake City) 2 (January 1886):1

In 1877 William D. Purple recalled that in February 1826, off by a month, he took notes at the trial/examination held "before Albert Neeley [Neely]."¹⁹⁴ The Methodist paper the *Utah Christian Advocate* disclosed that they received the manuscript proceedings from Episcopalian Bishop Daniel S. Tuttle.

The document we print below is interesting to those, who desire historic light on the origin of Mormonism. We received the Manuscript from Bishop Tuttle; and the following, from the good bishop's pen, explains how he came into possession of the Manuscript:--"The Ms. [Manuscript] was given me by Miss Emily Pearsall who, some years since, was a woman helper in our mission and lived in my family, and died here. Her father or uncle was a Justice of the Peace in Bainbridge[,] Chenango Co., New York, in Jo. [Joseph] Smith's time, and before him Smith was tried. Miss Pearsall tore the leaves out of the record found in her father's house and brought them to me."¹⁹⁵

¹⁹⁴ William D. Purple, "Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism, Historical Reminiscences of the Town of Afton," April 28, 1877 in *The Chenango Union* (Norwich, New York) 30 (May 3, 1877):3.

¹⁹⁵ "A Document Discovered," *Utah Christian Advocate* (Salt Lake City) 3 (January 1886):1, (misnumbered vol. 2, no. 13), Salt Lake City. Copies located at Drew University and Utah State Historical Society.

This additional information filled in more of how the record was obtained from which it had been published. The record was torn from Judge Albert Neely's docket book by his niece Miss Emily Pearsall. She died in 1872 after Charles Marshall made his copy and eventually printed it in 1873. It was also the source for Bishop Tuttle's 1883 article. Marshall described how he obtained his transcript: "During my stay in Salt Lake [City] permission was courteously accorded me to copy out a set of such judicial proceedings not hitherto published. I cannot doubt their genuineness. The original papers were lent me by a lady of well-known position, in whose family they had been preserved since the date of the transactions."¹⁹⁶ The lady would have been Emily Pearsall.

The record mentions that a complaint was made, evidently based upon a New York law, concerning disorderly persons. The statute that would seem to apply was enacted by New York in 1813 and stated in part: "all jugglers, and all persons pretending to have skill in physiognomy, palmistry, or like crafty science, or pretending to tell fortunes, or to discover where lost goods may be found; ... shall be deemed and adjudged disorderly persons."¹⁹⁷ It was not until over fifty-five years later in a 1945 reprint of Bishop Tuttle's 1883 printing by Fawn M. Brodie¹⁹⁸ that questions were asked about the published reports of the March 20, 1826 examination of Joseph Smith. Because the pages from the original docket book had been lost, the authenticity of these published accounts was questioned.

Justice Albert Neely

At the end of the published record, but omitted in Daniel Tuttle's 1883 article, was the costs relating to the case. The following were the cost as printed in *Fraser's Magazine*:

Warrant, 19c. [cents] Complaint upon oath, 25½c. Seven witnesses, 87½c.
Recognizances, 25c. Mittimus, 19c. Recognizances of witnesses, 75c. Subpoena,
18c.--\$2.68.

One researcher who was interested if there were any historical documents that could shed light on the published record was the Rev. Wesley P. Walters who previously confirmed the date of the Palmyra revival. In May 1971, over fifty years ago, he traveled to Norwich, New York, the county seat, to locate any nineteenth century documents that may have survived. He located the papers commissioning Albert Neely as Justice of the Peace, dated November 16, 1825, as well as

¹⁹⁶ Charles Marshall, "The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City," *Fraser's Magazine* (London) 7 (February 1873):229.

¹⁹⁷ "An Act for Apprehending and Punishing Disorderly Persons," in *Laws of the State of New-York, Revised and Passed at the Thirty-Sixth Session of the Legislature, with Marginal Notes and References, Furnished by the Revisors, William P. Van Ness & John Woodworth, Esquires, Pursuant to the Act, Entitled "An Act for Publishing the Laws of this State," Passed April 13th, 1813*, 2 vols. (Albany [New York]: H. C. Southwick, 1813), 1:114. "An ACT for apprehending and punishing disorderly Persons," 1:114-17. If an individual went to trial and was found guilty the punishment would be at the discretion of the court (551).

¹⁹⁸ Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, The Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), Appendix A.

more information establishing that he was in Bainbridge at this time. Neely held this office in 1826, 1827, and January 1828.

Neely's name appears in the civil Docket Book of Zechariah Tarble as a plaintiff in cases from February 26, 1825 through January 14, 1826. Neely was also a vestryman of the Protestant Episcopal church.¹⁹⁹ He was elected a Commissioner of Schools on March 7, 1826.²⁰⁰ He married Phebe Pearsall.²⁰¹

Itemized bills by Justice Albert Neely and Constable Philip De Zeng

The itemized bills of Justice Albert Neely and Constable Philip De Zeng, officials who participated in the arrest and examination of Joseph Smith, were discovered on July 28, 1971. The bills were located among dead-storage documents in the basement of the county jail in Norwich. It was in a mildew box that Fred Poffarl found the 1826 bills and also some bills for 1830.²⁰² These two bills were bound together with other 1826 Bainbridge bills submitted to the County Board of Supervisors for approval and payment. They were tied with pink string, which had been placed around them when the treasurer packaged them for storage after they had been marked "passed" and the total due each claimant had been carefully entered into the "Supervisor's Journal" beside his name.

These and other bills relating to Joseph Smith's Bainbridge court hearings were removed by Poffarl and Walters from the water-soaked box in which they were found and hand-carried to Yale University's Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Copies of the bills were sent to County Historian, Mrs. Mae Smith. Since the bills were the property of Chenango County they were received back by the county in October 1971.

The costs printed at the end of the proceeding are in keeping with standard established law at the time.²⁰³ In addition to the costs, further verification of the authenticity of the record is found in the fact that the names of all those listed as participants in the examination can be verified as people who were actually living in the Bainbridge area in 1826.

The 1826 bill which Albert Neely submitted to Chenango County for payment carries this entry; "same" means The People of the State of New York. It included the date of March 20, 1826.

¹⁹⁹ James H. Smith, *History of Chenango and Madison Counties, New York* (Syracuse, New York: D. Mason & Co., 1880), 176, and Charlah Ireland Skinner, *History of St. Peter's Church: Bainbridge, New York 1825 to 1975* (Bainbridge, New York: Broadcaster Press, 1975), 1.

²⁰⁰ Albert Neely's 1826 bills were submitted to the Chenango County Board of Supervisors, Clerk of the Board of Supervisors, Chenango County Office Building, Norwich, New York.

²⁰¹ Clarence E. Pearsall, ed., *History and Genealogy of the Pearsall Family in England and America* 2 (1928):1,144.

²⁰² Affidavit of Wesley P. Walters, October 28, 1971 and Statement of Fred Poffarl, May 27, 1973, copy in H. Michael Marquardt Papers, "Chronology of Norwich, New York County Bills (1971-1988)," Accession 900, Box 180, Folder 8, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

²⁰³ See *A New Conductor Generalis: Being a Summary of the Law Relative to the Duty and Office of Justices of the Peace, Sheriffs, Coroners, Constables, Jurymen, Overseers of the Poor* (Albany, New York: E. R. Backus, 1819), 481-82.

same
vs
Joseph Smith
The Glass looker
March 20. 1826

Misdemeanor

To my fees in examination
of the above Cause 2.68

The bill submitted by Philip M. De Zeng gives further details concerning this court procedure by listing:

Serving Warrant on Joseph Smith & travel	1.25
Subpoening 12 Witnesses & travel	2.[]0
Attendance with Prisoner two days & 1 night	1.25
Notifying two Justices	1—
16 miles travel with Mittimus to take him	1—

Neely's itemized bill of \$16.37, which included a number of other cases besides the examination of Joseph Smith, was "passed" by the Chenango County supervisors for \$15.44. De Zeng's bill of \$41.15 was passed, together with another bill for \$26 for a total of \$67.15. The total amounts of the bills for each year were entered into the "Supervisor's Journal" beside the name of the official in each town. This journal was housed in a separate building from that in which the bills were kept.

Bainbridge had four justices of the peace and two constables. Each justice handled cases in which one or both of the constables served warrants and subpoenas, and sometimes two or three justices were called together to form a court of special sessions to try a particular case. Therefore, the costs for some of the cases appear on the bills of several different officials. For example, the 1825 cases of Luke Crandall and Lewis Porter appear on the bills of Constable De Zeng, who made the arrest, and on the bills of Justices Levi Bigelow, James Humphrey, and Zechariah Tarble, who served as a court of special sessions to try the cases.²⁰⁴ This interrelatedness of bills substantiates the genuineness of any particular bill. In addition, each bill is in the distinctive handwriting of that individual, which can be validated from bills submitted in other years.

There was a question relating to the bill of De Zeng on "notifying two Justices" and whether this meant that there was a trial before additional justices. H. Michael Marquardt in May 1988 went to Norwich and searched for additional bills covering the ten-year period of 1820-1830 He was able to locate the 1826 bills of Justices Levi Bigelow and James Humphrey. No case was listed for Joseph Smith.

Court Record of Albert Neely

²⁰⁴ "Arrangement of Bills of Justices of the Peace and Constables for Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York, 1820-30," comp. H. Michael Marquardt, July 1988, Accession 900, Box 157, Folders 27-28, Manuscripts Division, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City.

The following base text is from the first 1873 printing of the case before Justice Albert Neeley of Bainbridge, Chenango County, New York. Words in brackets have been added from two other printings (1883 and 1886) of the handwritten pages. The original record is not extant. None of the printings contain every word of the complete record. Prisoner refers to Joseph Smith.²⁰⁵

[1883, 1886: PEOPLE OF] STATE OF NEW YORK v/[s]. JOSEPH SMITH.
Warrant issued upon written complaint upon oath of Peter G. Bridgeman, who informed that one Joseph Smith of Bainbridge was a disorderly person and an impostor.

Prisoner brought before Court March 20, 1826. Prisoner examined: says that he came from the town of Palmyra, and had been at the house of Josiah Stowel in Bainbridge most of time since; had small part of time been employed in looking for mines, but the major part had been employed by said Stowel on his farm, and going to school. That he had a certain stone which he had occasionally looked at to determine where hidden treasures in the bowels of the earth were; that he professed to tell in this manner where gold mines were a distance under ground, and had looked for Mr. Stowel several times, and had informed him where he could find these [1883, 1886: those] treasure [1883, 1886: treasures], and Mr. Stowel had been engaged in digging for them. That at Palmyra he pretended to tell by looking at this stone where coined money was buried in Pennsylvania, and while at Palmyra had frequently ascertained in that way where lost property was of various kinds; that he had occasionally been in the habit of looking through this stone to find lost property for three years, but of late had pretty much given it up on account of its injuring his health, especially his eyes, making [1883, 1886: made] them sore; that he did not solicit business of this kind, and had always rather declined having anything to do with this business.

Josiah Stowel sworn: says that prisoner had been at his house something like five months; had been employed by him to work on farm part of time; that he pretended to have skill of telling where hidden treasures in the earth were by means of looking through a certain stone; that prisoner had looked for him sometimes; once to tell him about money buried in Bend Mountain in Pennsylvania, once for gold on Monument Hill, and once for a salt spring; and that he positively knew that the prisoner could tell, and did possess [1883, 1886: possessed] the art of seeing those valuable treasures through the medium of said stone; that he found the (word illegible) [1883, 1886: digging part] at Bend and Monument Hill as prisoner represented it; that prisoner had looked through said stone for Deacon Attleton for a mine, did not exactly find it, but got a p__ [word unfinished] [1883, 1886: piece] of ore which resembled gold, he thinks; that prisoner had told by means of this stone where a Mr. Bacon had buried money;

²⁰⁵ For additional information on the court record, using the 1886 printing, see Dan Vogel, ed, *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996-2003) 4:239-66.

that he and prisoner had been in search of it; that prisoner had said it was in a certain root of a stump five feet from surface of the earth, and with it would be found a tail feather; that said Stowel and prisoner thereupon commenced digging, found a tail feather, but money was gone; that he supposed [1883, 1886: that] the money moved down. That prisoner did [1886: not] offer his services; that he never deceived him; that prisoner looked through stone and described Josiah Stowel's house and outhouses, while at Palmyra at Simpson Stowel's, correctly; that he had told about a painted tree, with a man's head painted upon it, by means of said stone. That he had been in company with prisoner digging for gold, and had the most implicit faith in prisoner's skill.

[1883, 1886: Horace Stowel sworn, says he see[n] Prisoner look into that strange [1883: hat through] stone, pretending to tell where a chest of dollars were buried in Windsor a number of miles distant, marked out size of chest in the leaves on ground.]

Arad Stowel sworn: says that he went to see whether prisoner could convince him that he possessed the skill he professed to have, upon which prisoner laid a book upon a white cloth, and proposed looking through another stone which was white and transparent, hold the stone to the candle, turn his head [1883, 1886: back] to book, and read. The deception appeared so palpable that witness went off disgusted.

McMaster sworn: says he went with Arad Stowel, [1883, 1886: to be convinced of Prisoner's skill] and likewise came away disgusted [1883, 1886: finding the deception so palpable]. Prisoner pretended to him that he could discover objects at a distance by holding this white stone to the sun or candle; that prisoner rather declined looking into a hat at his dark coloured stone, as he said that it hurt his eyes.

Jonathan Thompson says that prisoner was requested to look [1883: for; 1886: Yoemans] for chest of money; did look, and pretended to know where it was; and that prisoner, Thompson, and Yeomans went in search of it; that Smith arrived at spot first; was at night; that Smith looked in hat while there, and when very dark, and told how the chest was situated. After digging several feet, struck upon something sounding like a board or plank. Prisoner would not look again, pretending that he was alarmed [1883, 1886: the last time he looked] on account of the circumstances relating to the trunk being buried, [which] came all fresh to his mind. That the last time he looked he discovered distinctly the two Indians who buried the trunk, that a quarrel ensued between them, and that one of said Indians was killed by the other, and thrown into the hole beside [1883, 1886: of] the trunk, to guard it, as he supposed. Thompson says that he believes in the prisoner's professed skill; that the board which he struck his spade upon was probably the chest, but on account of an enchantment the trunk kept settling away from under them when digging; that notwithstanding they continued constantly removing the dirt, yet the trunk kept about the same distance from them. Says prisoner said that it appeared to him that salt might be found at Bainbridge, and that he is certain that prisoner can divine things by means of said stone [1883, 1886: and Hat]. That as evidence of the fact prisoner looked into his hat to tell

him about some money witness lost sixteen years ago, and that he described the man that witness supposed had taken it, and the disposition of the money:

And therefore the Court find[s] the Defendant guilty. Costs: Warrant, 19c. [cents] Complaint upon oath, 25½c [1886: 25]. Seven witnesses, 87½c. Recognizances, 25c. Mittimus, 19c. Recognizances of witnesses, 75c. Subpoena, 18c.--\$2.68.

Joseph Sr. and Jr. did not obtain any valuable treasure like gold or silver during the time they searched with Josiah Stowell in 1825. While spending their time away from their Manchester home they lost the one hundred acres of land that the family planned to own. As mentioned, the land was purchased soon after in December 1825 by Lemuel Durfee Sr.

Marriage of Joseph Smith and Emma Hale and promised to give up Glass looking

On January 18, 1827 twenty-one-year-old Joseph Smith married twenty-two-year-old Emma Hale. Smith asked Emma's father Isaac for his consent to marry her. Isaac did not give consent so shortly afterwards they went to New York and were married. The couple lived with Joseph's parents at the frame house in Manchester. Emma wanted some of her possessions including her clothing.

Emma and Joseph traveled back to Harmony with the help of Peter Ingersoll. Isaac Hale recalled that Joseph "Smith stated to me, that he had given up what he called 'glass-looking,' and that he expected to work hard for a living, and was willing to do so."²⁰⁶ Peter Ingersoll remembered this occasion and that Isaac Hale was upset with Joseph:

"You have stolen my daughter and married her. I had much rather have followed her to her grave. You spend your time in digging for money—pretend to see in a stone, and thus try to deceive people." Joseph wept, and acknowledged he could not see in a stone now, nor never could; and that his former pretensions in that respect, were all false. He then promised to give up his old habits of digging for money and looking into stones.²⁰⁷

Two Trials, Summer 1830

Four year later in the summer of 1830, after the publication of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith was brought before Chenango County Justice of the Peace Joseph P. Chamberlin and also Broome County Justice of the Peace Joel K. Noble. The first case was reported in an 1831 letter by Abram Willard Benton who wrote concerning Joseph Smith:

²⁰⁶ Statement of Isaac Hale, March 20, 1834 in "Mormonism," *Susquehanna Register, and Northern Pennsylvanian* 9 (May 1, 1834):1; Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 264.

²⁰⁷ Statement of Peter Ingersoll, December 2, 1833 in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 234-35.

For several years preceding the appearance of his book, he was about the country in the character of a glass-looker; pretending, by means of a certain stone, or glass, which he put in a hat, to be able to discover lost goods, hidden treasures, mines of gold and silver, &c.²⁰⁸

Benton referred to the 1826 court examination when Smith was “arrested as a disorderly person, tried and condemned before a court of Justice. But, considering his youth, (he then being a minor) and thinking he might reform his conduct, he was designedly allowed to escape. This was four or five years ago.”

On the first 1830 trial Benton wrote, regarding Joseph Smith, “he was again arraigned before a bar of Justice, during last Summer, to answer to a charge of misdemeanor.” Benton recalled the testimony of Addison Austin who testified “at the very same time that Stowell was digging for money, he, Austin, was in company with said Smith alone, and asked him to tell him honestly whether he could see this money or not. Smith hesitated some time, but finally replied, 'to be candid, between you and me, I cannot, any more than you or any body else; but any way to get a living.'" The full name of Addison Austin is Joseph Addison Spencer Austin.

Notes of the second court case before Joel K. Noble, Justice of the Peace at Colesville, were published in September 1832. “The defendant was brought before me by virtue of a warrant on the 30th day of June, A. D. 1830, on a charge ‘that he, the said Joseph Smith, Jr. had been guilty of a breach of the Peace, against the good people of the State of New York, by looking through a certain stone to find hid treasures, &c., within the Statute of Limitation.’”

Justice Noble summarized the testimony of Joseph A. S. Austin who again testified:

that he had been acquainted with Smith, the Prisoner, for several years; that prisoner pretended to look in a certain glass, or stone, and said he could tell where stolen goods were, and could discover mines of gold and silver under ground; made some pretence at telling fortune, but he, witness, never knew of prisoner’s finding any thing by his pretended art. Once witness asked prisoner to tell him if he, prisoner, could tell any thing by looking in said glass, and wished a candid and true answer. Prisoner told witness frankly, he could not see any thing, and in answer, prisoner likewise observed to witness, any thing you know for a living

Josiah Stowell also testified at this trial with the outcome that “Joseph Smith, jr., was discharged; he had not looked in the glass for two years to find money; &c.—hence it was outlawed.”²⁰⁹

Conclusion

Besides helping his father on the Smith farm Joseph Jr. was engaged with other individuals in the Manchester/Palmyra area as a treasure seeker. That Smith was known far away

²⁰⁸ Letter by A.W.B. [Abram W. Benton] to editor, March 1831, "Mormonites," *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate* (Utica, New York) 2 (April 9, 1831):120.

²⁰⁹ “Mormonism,” *Boston Christian Herald* (Boston, Massachusetts) 4 (September 19, 1832):2-3, emphasis omitted.

as one who could locate buried treasure is why Josiah Stowell hired him. As shown from the record of Albert Neely, Joseph had two men, Stowell and Thompson, who considered that there was something to Joseph using a stone. The ability to be able to see valuable treasures in the earth was seen as impressive. Nothing of value was found. Many individuals believed that a seer was greater than a prophet.

Changing Revelatory Messages: A Mormon Example²¹⁰

Introduction

This article makes clear that there were changes in Joseph Smith's revelations and early story. Messages were later amended and redacted. First, a brief review will be made of the 1835 changes in Smith's revelations and how they related to a new condition. Second, an examination will be made of Smith's history and how modifications occurred in the story of his visions.

"Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my Preface unto the Book of my Commandments, which I have given them to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth."²¹¹ These words were uttered by Mormonism's founding prophet Joseph Smith on November 1, 1831, at a conference held at the John Johnson Sr. home in Hiram, Ohio.²¹² Though the printing of Smith's revelations was disrupted in July 1833, there were enough copies put together in makeshift bindings that indicate that copies were sold and referred to as late as 1835.²¹³

Divine revelation is usually characterized as the imparting of truth to men and women through mystical means that are distinct from ordinary human thought. But for Joseph Smith, revelation seemed to come from day-to-day experience, from interactions with other people, and from the study of biblical texts. Richard Van Wagoner explained, "Upgrading [of] revelations and retrospective editing the past are hallmarks of early Mormonism."²¹⁴

On December 31, 1833, twenty-nine-year-old Wilford Woodruff was baptized into the Church of Christ.²¹⁵ In August 1834 he purchased a copy of the Book of Commandments from John

²¹⁰ First published in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 33 (Spring/Summer 2013).

²¹¹ A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ (Zion [Independence, MO]: Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), chapter 1:2, hereafter cited as Book of Commandments; also in *The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City, 1981), section 1:6, hereafter cited as LDS D&C; and *Book of Doctrine and Covenants* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1990), Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, section 1:2 (hereafter cited as RLDS D&C). Subparagraph letters of RLDS D&C not included.

²¹² The Conference Minutes, and Record Book, of Christ's Church of Latter Day Saints, 15–16, Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, hereafter cited as Church History Library. See Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830–1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 26–27. The minutes were recorded in this record book in 1838.

²¹³ See for example 1835 D&C, Lecture of Theology, Lecture 3:10.

²¹⁴ Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 129n5.

²¹⁵ Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, typescript, 1833–98, vol. 1 (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983), 6.

Whitmer in Clay County, Missouri.²¹⁶ Woodruff recalled two decades later, “I saw the book of commandments or revelations given through Joseph Smith, and I believed them with all my heart, and rejoiced therein.”²¹⁷ A few smaller organizations, such as the Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and churches of Christ (with the Elijah Message) use the Book of Commandments as part of the Restoration story.

Early Texts of Revelations

On April 6, 1830, at Manchester, New York, a revelation regarding Joseph Smith Jr., and the Church of Christ, declared: “Wherefore, meaning the church, thou shalt give heed unto all his words, and commandments, which he shall give unto you, as he receiveth them, walking in all holiness before me.”²¹⁸ By comparing early texts, one can often reconstruct the original wording. Smith’s revelations did not have to be revised since early copies were available for examination. But by examining the messages that were changed, we may gain insight into why these revisions were made.

The sacred word, relayed through fallible prophets, was neither inerrant nor static in Joseph Smith’s view—so as the need arose, he revised the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and his autobiography and revelations. Smith revised his revelations in accordance with his developing theology. Clare Vlahos, among others, questioned this approach: “That Joseph Smith *in general* made changes in the written revelations can tell us only one thing: that he did not believe the particular words he put down on the page were literally God’s.”²¹⁹

Changes were made in many of the 1828–33 revelations. They reflected Smith’s theology, modifications in church government, recognition of former discrepancies, and sensitivity to criticism engendered by the originals as reconstructed in early 1835.²²⁰ The modified wording departed from what was expressed at the time the revelations were written, representing ideas current at the time the revisions were made. Such clear-cut redactions indicate ideas out of their proper timeframe and may be characterized as anachronisms.

In 2009 a handwritten manuscript book titled “A Book of Commandments & Revelations” (hereafter cited as BCR), which had been in the possession of the Church of Jesus

²¹⁶ John Whitmer Account Book, under the date of August 12, 1834, Church History Library. Wilford Woodruff was ordained a priest on November 5, 1834, his license being signed by John Whitmer. See Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal*, 1:14.

²¹⁷ “History of Wilford Woodruff (From his own pen),” *Deseret News*, July 7, 1858, Fillmore City, Utah Territory.

²¹⁸ Book of Commandments 22:4; LDS D&C 21:4; RLDS 19:2.

²¹⁹ Clare D. Vlahos, “A Question of Methodology,” *Courage: A Journal of History, Thought and Action* 2, no.3 (Spring 1972): 465, emphasis in original.

²²⁰ See Robert J. Woodford, “How the Revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants Were Received and Compiled,” *Ensign*, January 1985, 27–33 and Karl F. Best, “Changes in the Revelations, 1833 to 1835,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 25, no. 1 (Spring 1992): 87–112.

Christ of Latter-day Saints since the 1830s, was published by the Church Historian's Press.²²¹ The record contains handwritten modifications to the prophet's revelatory messages. This is the earliest known compilation of Smith's revelations or commandments. As Richard L. Bushman explained, "He revised his own revelations, adding new material and splicing one to another, altering the wording as he saw fit. He felt authorized to expand the revelations as his understanding expanded."²²²

Through textual criticism, scholars may determine what the early wording of texts contained and may thereby confirm that revelatory documents have been modified subsequent to their reception. As in the case of scholars who compare biblical texts, this method can be used in comparing handwritten manuscripts and printed works to deduce the early text. Joseph Smith was authorized to make simple corrections for the forthcoming Book of Commandments. Historical research indicates that there were modifications in Smith's revelations beyond simple copying errors. Theologians can evaluate which changes were made on purpose and how such changes relate to differing concepts of revelation in the Latter-day Saint community.

Individuals involved in the printing of Smith's revelations included Oliver Cowdery and William W. Phelps, whose handwritten notations are contained in the BCR. Cowdery worked on printing the Book of Commandments and also the *Evening and the Morning Star*. Cowdery's copy of the Book of Commandments contains notations for the new edition of the revelations for the forthcoming work titled Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints. Many of the revisions by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery were made during the months of January through June 1835, nearly a year before John Whitmer and W. W. Phelps brought the BCR back to Kirtland from Missouri.²²³ A reprint of the *Star* contains the revised text for a few revelations that were used for the Doctrine and Covenants.

In preparing the revelatory messages for the new publication, Smith wanted to include in this work a better image of his organization. By this means he could provide new meaning to his messages. Revising prior revelations gave him new interpretation with clearer understanding to the church he founded. The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants contained the doctrine as presented in a series of lectures on the theology of faith authored by Sidney Rigdon, who was the church theologian.²²⁴ The second part of the Doctrine and Covenants was the Covenants and

²²¹ Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2009).

²²² Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2005), 285.

²²³ This includes the Kirtland reprint of the *Evening and Morning Star* for the issues printed from January through June 1835.

²²⁴ Sidney Rigdon's contribution included a number of series printed in the *Evening and the Morning Star* and *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*, Kirtland, Ohio. The titles of a few of the articles were "Millennium," "Faith of the Church," and "The Gospel." Readers were informed about the articles, "they are from the pen of our worthy brother and friend, S. RIGDON, one of the Presidents of the church of the Latter Day Saints." *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 2 (November 1834): 26. On the authorship of the lectures on faith see Noel B. Reynolds, "The Case for Sidney Rigdon as Author of the *Lectures on Faith*," *Journal of Mormon History* 31, no. 2 (Fall 2005): 1-41.

Commandments. As the preface explains, it “contains items or principles for the regulation of the church.”²²⁵ This helps explain why the locations where many of the revelations were received were omitted with only a month and year included. Omitting that information focused the universality of the message.

The church’s changing situation is reflected in the 1835 alterations of the revelations. Knowing the historical background of the revelations makes it is easy to understand why Smith wanted to alter the original rendering to a new situation—because most of the revelations were given during the primitive period of the church’s development. The altered format helps us understand the doctrinal, historical, and theological shifts made in the modified 1835 text.²²⁶

Oliver Cowdery was blessed in April 1834 “to assist brother Sidney [Rigdon] in arranging the church covenants.”²²⁷ In September Cowdery was selected to join Joseph Smith, Frederick G. Williams, and Sidney Rigdon in the formation of a committee to arrange items of doctrine and revelations for the church.²²⁸

In the September 1834 issue of the *Evening and the Morning Star*—printed in Kirtland—a “PROSPECTUS FOR RE-PRINTING THE FIRST AND SECOND VOLUMES OF THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR” appeared. According to the editor, the twenty-four numbers were to be reprinted with typographical corrections.²²⁹ Cowdery further explained to the reader:

On the revelations we merely say, that we were not a little surprised to find the previous print so different from the original. We have given them a careful comparison, assisted by individuals whose known integrity and ability is unexcusable. Thus saying we cast no reflections upon those who were entrusted with the responsibility of publishing them in Missouri, as our own labors were included in that important service to the church, and it was our unceasing endeavor to have them correspond with the copy furnished us. We believe they are now correct. If not in every word, at least in principle. For the special good of the church we have also added a few items from other revelations.²³⁰

Careful study shows that if any original manuscripts (previous to 1835) were used, their exact wording was not adhered to. Issues reprinted between January and June 1835 contained

²²⁵ 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, iii.

²²⁶ The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants is the text that the following works are based upon: John Whitmer History, History of Joseph Smith, Lucy Mack Smith History, Joseph Knight Sr. History, Newel Knight Autobiography, Joseph Knight Jr. History, and John Murdock Autobiography.

²²⁷ Joseph Smith journal, 78, April 19, 1834, Church History Library; Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 41.

²²⁸ Kirtland Council Minute Book, 76, Church History Library. Minutes of a meeting held on September 24, 1834.

²²⁹ Prospectus dated Kirtland, Ohio, September 26, 1834, in the *Evening and the Morning Star* 2, no. 24 (September 1834): 192. The prospectus was dated two days after the September 24 high council meeting.

²³⁰ *Evening and Morning Star* (Kirtland reprint) 1, no. 2 (June 1832): 16, reprinted January 1835.

altered texts, deleted previously published material, and inserted editorial comments by Cowdery. As stated in a recent publication, “Despite the implications of Cowdery’s statement, very few of the changes in the reprint represent a restoration back to the earliest text, though Cowdery consulted early manuscript sources when reprinting some of the revelations. Because the revelations were meant to be used as a guide for the current operations of the church, they were edited in 1835 to reflect current organization, doctrine, and practice, which had continued to develop since the revelations were first dictated.”²³¹

When the typesetting was completed as far as it could go, a hastily called general assembly was called together on August 17, 1835. The assembly voted on the book as a whole, thereby canonizing the Doctrine and Covenants. There was no indication that anyone realized that the text of some of the revelations had been revised, deleted, or enlarged. The revelations were accepted in their altered form without comment, apparently in the belief that they were identical to those originally given to the church. No explanation was made by the committee, either in the preface or within the text of the revelations, as to why alterations had been made. Contrary to Oliver Cowdery’s editorial comments, it seems that revelatory texts differing from those that had been previously published were changed without regard to the wording of those earlier documents.

It is a well-established canon of textual criticism that in order to uncover the original text, one must follow the earliest and best manuscripts available.²³² The biblical textual critic works with versions from various scribes in an attempt to determine which reading is most likely closest to the original.

In applying these principles to the revelations of Joseph Smith, two distinctly different approaches must be applied to the texts themselves. The first approach involves comparing among the various versions of the printed texts. Instead of peeling back layers of scribal variations, as one would do with the biblical texts in an attempt to restore the original, the critic in this case peels back various layers of editing in an attempt to restore the original text of the revelation.

The second step of textual criticism regarding Joseph Smith’s revelations is similar to biblical text criticism. Various extant scribal manuscripts of the revelations are compared in an attempt to uncover the text of the revelation as Joseph Smith originally stated it. These principles would allow the re-creation of the original text of the Smith revelations and to understand better the revelations in the context in which they were given.

In recent years there has been a growing willingness on the part of some LDS writers to admit the existence of variant readings of the early revelations.²³³ This has been evident even

²³¹ Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 199.

²³² For text critical methods, see Kurt and Barbara Aland, *The Text of the New Testament, An Introduction to the Critical Edition and to the Theory and Practice of Modern Textual Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans/E.J. Brill, 1987); Bruce M. Metzger, *The Text of the New Testament, Its Transmission, Corruption, and Restoration*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992); and Bruce M. Metzger, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament*, 2nd ed. (Stuttgart, Ger.: German Bible Society, 1994).

²³³ See, for example, Robert J. Woodford, “How the Revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants were Received and Compiled,” *Ensign*, January 1985, 27–33 and Melvin J. Petersen; “Preparing Early Revelations for Publication,” *Ensign*, February 1985, 14–20; Marlin K. Jensen, “The Joseph

though in the past there has been reluctance by some to accept this possibility. For example, Parley P. Pratt gave the impression that the words Joseph Smith used while dictating remained the same.²³⁴

My study will focus on three areas. First, revelations not contained in the Book of Commandments; second, examples of textual changes starting in January 1835 for the Doctrine and Covenants; and finally, how the redactions in the revelations have significance when considering the manuscript history of Joseph Smith.

Previous to the BCR publication one could determine that there would be some textual revision to LDS sections D&C 17 and 57 since they were not published in the Book of Commandments. LDS section 17 states that the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon would see the plates by faith. The text was modified by adding the biblical term Urim and Thummim, which had not been in use in 1829. LDS section 57 had a note, “Not to be printed at present.”²³⁵ This is the revelation that designated Independence, Jackson County, Missouri as the center place location for the New Jerusalem and its temple. The redactions made are not consistent with the prospect of bringing the gospel to the Native Americans. The original wording contained instructions on taking the gospel to the Lamanites:²³⁶

let my servent Sidney [Gilbert] obtain a license (behold here is wisdom & whoso readeth let him understand) that he may send goods also unto the Lamanites even by whom he will as clerks employed in his service & thus the gospel may be preached unto them²³⁷

The 1835 revision reads in part:

let my servent Sidney gilbert obtain a licence . . . that he may send goods also unto the *people* even by whom *he* will as clerks, employed in his service & thus *provide for my saints, that my gospel may be preached unto those who sit in darkness and in the region and shadow of death*²³⁸

Three manuscripts then exist of the July 20, 1831, revelation regarding the gathering to

Smith Papers: The Manuscript Revelation Books,” *Ensign*, July 2009, 47–51; Robert J. Woodford, “Introducing A Book of Commandments and Revelations, A Major New Documentary ‘Discovery,’” *BYU Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 7–17; and Grant Underwood, “Revelation, Text, and Revision: Insight from the Book of Commandments and Revelations,” *BYU Studies* 48, no. 3 (2009): 67–84.

²³⁴ Parley P. Pratt [Jr.], ed., *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 48.

²³⁵ Book of Commandments & Revelations, 93, Church History Library.

²³⁶ “Lamanites” is a Book of Mormon term for Native Americans.

²³⁷ Book of Commandments & Revelations, 94, reading before modification, Church History Library. Here it is understood that clerks will be employed under license in the Gilbert store to bring goods to the Native Americans and thereby obtain entrance and do missionary work among them.

²³⁸ Book of Commandments & Revelations, 94, revised text, Church History Library; 1835 D&C 27:4; LDS D&C 57:9–10; RLDS 57:4.

Missouri and concerning A. Sidney Gilbert. The thrust of the passage was altered. First, all the goods were now to be sent to the “people,” which obscures the meaning. Second, the people are more specifically designated as being the saints. And third, the purpose was to provide means for preaching to the lost anywhere.

Examples of Textual Revision, Starting in January 1835

What follows are some examples of revisions in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. They are presented in numerical order of the sections.

Section 1; source: Oliver Cowdery’s Book of Commandments, chapter 1.

Section 2 (LDS D&C 20); source: *Evening and Morning Star* (June 1832), reprinted January 1835.

By January 1835 there were references to offices instituted after their acceptance at the conference held in June 1830. Included in the revision were bishops, high counselors, high priests, and president of the high priesthood. The 1835 office of apostle was not added.²³⁹

Instructions on Priesthood

Section 3 (LDS D&C 107)

How much of section 3 was presented in its 1835 form to the twelve apostles is not known. The citation to a revelation given on November 11, 1831, but not printed as a separate message in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, illustrates how textual redactions of 1835 could give the impression that the wording used is what the original 1831 revelation contained. The early text says that “a bishop must be chosen from the high priesthood,” meaning from those who hold the office of high priest. The idea of a bishop being a descendant of Aaron was added to the November 11 revelation and is also repeated in section 22 (LDS D&C 68), which is another November 1831 revelatory message.

Who Baptized John the Baptist?

Section 4 (LDS D&C 84); source Kirtland Revelations Book (hereafter cited as KRB): “To go into th[e] covenants.”

The early text said that John the Baptist was to be “raised up being fillid [filled] with the holy ghost from his Mother[’]s womb, for he was baptised while he was yet in the womb.”²⁴⁰ For this section the words “the womb” were omitted and replaced with “his Childhood.”²⁴¹

High Council of the Church of Christ

Section 5 (LDS D&C 102); source KRB: “To go into the coven[an]ts.”

The minutes of the February 17, 1834, meeting of the Kirtland High Council were read at least twice two days later. Joseph Smith was authorized to make corrections at the time. The

²³⁹ *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 1 (June 1832): 4, reprinted January 1835; 1835 D&C 2:16–17; LDS D&C 20:65–67; compared with Book of Commandments 24, between verses 44 and 45.

²⁴⁰ Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

²⁴¹ Kirtland Revelations Book, 23. See revision in 1835 D&C 4:4; LDS D&C 84:28.

minutes were corrected and recorded in the KRB. Eight months later, after April 28, 1835, a reference was added to the minutes about “a distinction between the high council of travelling high priests abroad, and the travelling high council composed of the twelve apostles.”²⁴²

Laws of the Church

Section 13 (LDS D&C 42); source: Oliver Cowdery’s Book of Commandments; Book of Commandments chapters 44 and 47; *Evening and Morning Star* (July 1832): 9, reprinted February 1835; and (October 1832): 34, reprinted June 1835.

This section is a revision of instructions given four years previously. When this section was first reprinted in February 1835, changes were made to the law of consecration. The words “high council,” not in the revelation of 1831, were added; wording relating to Joseph Smith’s Bible revision was again modified, and the office of “high priest” inserted.

Firstborn son of Aaron

Section 22 (LDS D&C 68); source BCR, 113–14, *Evening and Morning Star* (October 1832): 73, reprinted June 1835.

The 1831 text stated that other bishops could be set apart and they would need to be “an high priest who is worthy” and “be appointed by a conference of high priests.” The conference is changed to being appointed by “the first presidency of the Melchizedek priesthood, except they be literal descendants of Aaron.” A descendant of Aaron would have legal right to the bishopric. In this addition there is further clarification than what is found in section 3.

Again, the incorrect impression is that this is the identical revelation given on November 1, 1831, to Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, Lyman Johnson, and William McLellin. The early wording gave the instructions, “These sayings are true and faithful: wherefore transgress them not, neither take therefrom.” In the revision words like “conference” and “high priests” were omitted and replaced. The reason why these words were changed is that since March 1832 there had existed a new council known as the presidency of the high priesthood and designated in 1835 as the first presidency, usually composed of three high priests. This redaction was done after May 16 and near the end of June 1835 with the publication of the reprint of the *Evening and Morning Star*.²⁴³

May the Kingdom of God go Forth

Section 24 (LDS D&C 65); source BCR, 112.

Another revelation of interest is a prayer that was revealed and copied in the BCR, KRB, and printed with the same wording in Independence, Missouri, in 1832 and in Kirtland, Ohio, in

²⁴² Kirtland Council Minute Book, 32–35, corrected minutes of February 17, 1834, Church History Library. A copy of the minutes was made by Orson Hyde in Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C, Church History Library, and Kirtland Revelations Book, 111–15, both recorded August 27, 1834. See 1835 D&C 5:13; LDS D&C 102:30–32.

²⁴³ Book of Commandments & Revelations, 113–14.

1835.²⁴⁴ The BCR contains the minor change which helps us determine that the words crossed through “hewn from” and replaced with “cut out of” would have been done shortly after May 16 in time to set the type for the Doctrine and Covenants.²⁴⁵

Restoration of All Things

Section 50 (LDS D&C 27); source: Book of Commandments, chapter 28; with additional wording.

The shortest text supports the basic wording that was printed in the Book of Commandments. Of all of the revision this one was very important since the organization of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles was completed at the end of April 1835. The names of those who would partake of the fruit of the vine with Jesus were added to the early text. The 1835 revision lists Moroni, Elias [Gabriel], John the Baptist, Elijah, and other patriarchs. Also mentioned were Michael (or Adam), Peter, James, and John. The New Testament apostles Peter, James, and John, who held “the keys of your ministry,” now first appear in a church record. Although there is no known account of the Peter, James, and John being sent to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, the names of the three apostles were added to an 1830 revelatory message after May 16, 1835.

The redaction makes sense in advancing the idea of priesthood keys. Moroni holds the “keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim,” and others having their keys committed to men on the earth. Each key would help in the anticipated restoration of all things.

The 1835 printed text is not the message presented by an angel in the voice of Jesus given in September 1830. No church member is known to worry that this revelation represented a new tradition of changing earlier messages in the light of new understanding since the church had its own Quorum of Twelve Apostles. Book of Commandments, chapter 28 “was greatly expanded when it was printed in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. The material added to the 1835 version included updated and expanded doctrine on priesthood keys that was not known at the time the revelation was originally dictated”²⁴⁶

Michael, Your Prince

Section 75; (LDS D&C 78); source: BCR, 145–46, in part.

This revelation given in Kirtland, Ohio, on March 1, 1832, included pseudonyms, so the heading for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants said: “The order given of the Lord to Enoch, for the

²⁴⁴ Book of Commandments & Revelations, 112; Kirtland Revelations Book, 87; *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1, no. 4 (September 1832): 26; *Evening and Morning Star* 1, no. 4 (September 1832): 62, reprinted April 1835 before John Whitmer and W. W. Phelps arrived in Kirtland with the Book of Commandments & Revelations. The text is the same before revisions in Book of Commandments & Revelations. William E. McLellin’s copy contains the same early text. See Jan Shippy and John W. Welch, eds., *The Journals of William E. McLellin, 1831–1836* (Provo, UT: BYU Studies/Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 242–43.

²⁴⁵ Book of Commandments & Revelations, 112.

²⁴⁶ Jensen, Turley, and Lorimer, *Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*, xxxi.

purpose of establishing the poor.” This was not a revelation given to ancient Enoch although it gave the impression in the heading that it was. The words “Jesus Christ to” were changed to “the Son Ahman.” The largest insertion mentioned the Lord God “who hath established the foundations of Adam-ondi-Ahman; who hath appointed Michael, your prince, and established his feet, and set him upon high; and given to him the keys of salvation under the counsel and direction of the Holy One, who is without beginning of days or end of life.”²⁴⁷ It is possible that the addition was on a pinned note in the BCR. This addition is of interest regarding the place of Adam in Latter-day Saint theology.

The above historical examples help establish the original texts and show us how changes were made to those revelations. The textual history of the revelations as a living document shows them changing and expanding. Every stage of the development provides us with valuable insights. However, the earliest texts are essential in uncovering the original intentions and meanings of the revelations and of the historical circumstances surrounding them. A better text leads to a greater appreciation of the early history of the Restoration movement.

Revelations have been changed as has the Joseph Smith Story

Besides revising his own commandments and revelations, Joseph Smith also revised the Bible and the first edition of the Book of Mormon. It should not come as a surprise that Smith revised the early story of his visionary experiences. This is evident in the accounts of a number of persons who heard him tell about his early life. At times events were modified, omitted, and expanded. There are basically four accounts of the visions known to have come from Joseph Smith:

1. 1832 account, recorded in a record book by Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith.
2. 1834–35 Oliver Cowdery letters, containing information that came from Joseph Smith, as printed in the *Messenger and Advocate*. (The letters were later copied into Smith’s large journal.)
3. 1835 account, written into Joseph Smith’s Journal, recorded by his scribe.
4. 1838 History of Joseph Smith, commenced in 1838 and copied by a clerk in 1839 (also considered Smith’s journal).²⁴⁸

Revival and First Vision

Joseph Smith told in his 1838–39 history about an excitement on the subject of religion (a revival) taking place before his first vision. He placed it in the spring of 1820. He said that he was told that all churches were an abomination. Members of his family joined the Presbyterian Church

²⁴⁷ 1835 D&C 75:3; LDS D&C 78:15–16.

²⁴⁸ “In the last number,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842): 726, Nauvoo, Illinois. Joseph Smith’s direct involvement in the history includes from his birth to July 1828, as copied in Manuscript History, book A-1:1–10, Church History Library. This would include the “History of Joseph Smith” published serially, *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 12 (May 16, 1842): 786.

because of this religious excitement while he was drawn to the Methodists.²⁴⁹ Later, according to Smith, an angel appeared to him and gave him instructions, leading eventually to the discovery of a religious and historical record written on plates of gold. Like the revelatory messages that were changed, the early story was also revised.

The first published history of early Mormonism was written by Oliver Cowdery and printed in the *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate*. This consisted of a series of eight letters to W. W. Phelps. The third letter explained what occurred in the fifteenth year of Joseph Smith's life in 1820:

One Mr. Lane, a presiding Elder of the Methodist church, visited Palmyra, and vicinity. Elder Lane was a tallented man possessing a good share of literary endowments, and apparent humility. There was a great awakening, or excitement raised on the subject of religion, and much enquiry for the word of life. Large additions were made to the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches.

Cowdery continued, "In this general strife for followers, his mother, one sister, and two of his natural brothers, were persuaded to unite with the Presbyterians."²⁵⁰ In his fourth letter Oliver Cowdery said there "was an error in the type" and corrected the date to Smith's seventeenth year which, he said, "would bring the date down to the year 1823."²⁵¹ Peter Crawley wrote, "Whatever was intended in Letter III, certain problems persist. Joseph Smith's seventeenth year was 1822, not 1823. And Rev. George Lane was most prominently in the Palmyra area in 1824–25. It is conceivable that Cowdery shifted the date after realizing he had introduced Lane at the wrong time."²⁵²

In Lucy Mack Smith's draft of her history, she added details that also suggest an 1824 date for the revival. She began by linking the revival to the death of her son Alvin, who died in November 1823 (subsequently crossed out), "About this time their [there] was a great revival in religion and the whole neighborhood was very much aroused to the subject and we among the rest flocked to the meeting house."²⁵³

An examination of newspaper accounts, religious periodicals, church records, and personal narratives show that there were no significant gains in church memberships or any other signs of excitement or revival in Palmyra in 1820. There was a stirring and momentous revival

²⁴⁹ The fact that the names of Smith's mother and brothers appear later as members of the Palmyra Presbyterian Church, who were dropped for nonattendance, is further evidence that the revival Joseph Smith had in view affected the local Presbyterian Church. See "Records of the Session of the Presbyterian Church in Palmyra," vol. 2:11–12, Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra, Palmyra, New York; microfilm, film 900, reel 59, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. Volume 1, which may have listed the Smiths as members, has been missing since at least 1898.

²⁵⁰ "Dear Brother," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 3 (December 1834): 42–43, Kirtland, Ohio.

²⁵¹ "Dear Brother," *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 5 (February 1835): 78.

²⁵² *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church, Volume One 1830–1847* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1997 [1998]), 240.

²⁵³ Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 357.

there with all the features that Joseph Smith's history mentions during the fall and winter of 1824–25. At the beginning of his manuscript history Joseph Smith stated:

In this history I will present the various events in relation to this Church in truth and righteousness as they have transpired, or as they at present exist, being now the eighth year since the organization of said Church.²⁵⁴

The Palmyra excitement or revival was the backdrop for Smith's first vision. This history was a theological or faith-oriented account telling the events "as they have transpired, or as they at present exist." David Thelen wrote concerning memory, "What is important is that the memory be authentic for the person at the moment of construction, not that it be an accurate depiction of a past moment."²⁵⁵ Another historian, Marvin S. Hill, concluded that the 1838–39 account was "streamlined for publication," making the story "more logical and compelling."²⁵⁶

In the account written by Smith in 1832, a revival was not the motivating factor for his first vision and receipt of absolution.²⁵⁷ Likewise, in his 1835 telling he mentioned that a personage had told him "thy sins are forgiven thee."²⁵⁸

Once it is realized that the revival and the first vision are two separate events, we begin to get closer to the personal experience of Joseph Smith in his religious quest. How much of Smith's 1838–39 account recalls his feelings around the time of this vision is hard to determine. But when other events are taken into consideration, it appears that using the word "abomination"²⁵⁹ in reference to the creeds is language too strong for that time period, especially since members of Smith's family joined the local Presbyterian Church after 1820.

Second Vision

Smith's second vision about an angel revealing to him the location of the gold plates included words of the messenger that must have been post-1823. Using Joseph's story as a guide, we can see more clearly how the words in his history fit 1838 rather than pre-1827. The reason for this is that in 1836 Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery reported a vision of the Old Testament

²⁵⁴ Manuscript History book A-1:1, Church History Library; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:267–68.

²⁵⁵ David Thelen, "Memory and American History," *Journal of American History* 75 (March 1989): 1,123.

²⁵⁶ Marvin S. Hill, "The First Vision Controversy: A Critique and Reconciliation," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 2 (Summer 1982): 39.

²⁵⁷ 1832 account, "A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.," Church History Library, in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:5–6.

²⁵⁸ Joseph Smith journal, 24, November 9, 1835, Church History Library, in Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, 88. Smith also told about the gold plates, "When I was about 17 years old I saw another vision of angels."

²⁵⁹ Manuscript History A-1:3; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:273; Joseph Smith-History, 1:19, Pearl of Great Price.

prophet Elijah. The messenger quoted the following for Malachi chapter 4, verse 5: “Behold I will reveal unto you the Priesthood by the hand of Elijah the prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord.”²⁶⁰

Would the personage have spoken these words in 1823? If not, then their absence would confirm that we are dealing with a theological story. It means that those actual words would not have been spoken during the visionary experience. The official 1838–39 account, the latest redaction, is currently what the majority of believers accept. It becomes a story of faith if critical analysis remains absent from Smith’s story.

A simple examination makes it clear that the words attributed to the angel would not have been used in 1823 but at a time after the publication of the Book of Mormon.²⁶¹ There would have been no reason to quote the passage differently. Sidney Rigdon in 1830 was looked upon as a preparer, like John the Baptist, to prepare the way “before Elijah which should come.”²⁶² When Joseph Smith made his revision of Malachi in July 1833, he considered the book “Correct.”²⁶³

When one of the early commandments received on September 4, 1830, was prepared for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, wording was added relating to biblical individuals who would drink wine with the returned Savior, indicating that Elijah held priesthood keys with the words, “and also Elijah, unto whom I have committed the keys of the power of turning the hearts of the fathers to the children and the hearts of the children to the fathers, that the whole earth may not be smitten with a curse.”²⁶⁴

On April 3, 1836, it was recorded that Elijah the prophet appeared in a glorious vision to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery and committed to them “the Keys of this dispensation.”²⁶⁵ Looking back to 1836, Smith later explained that the promise of Elijah coming to reveal priesthood keys was a fulfillment of a promise made in connection to the time he first learned about the Book of Mormon plates. The added words relating to the future promise of obtaining the priesthood from the hand of Elijah are an anachronism.

Joseph appeared to perceive his 1823 experience as an important indicator of his prophetic role. As he retold the story to family, acquaintances, and eventually to church members, the initial experience took on special characteristics.

²⁶⁰ Manuscript History A-1:5; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:278; LDS D&C 2; Joseph Smith-History 1:38.

²⁶¹ Malachi 4:5–6 (KJV) is quoted in the 1830 Book of Mormon, 505; LDS 3 Nephi 25:5–6; RLDS 3 11:26–27.

²⁶² Book of Commandments & Revelations, 46; LDS D&C 35:4; RLDS D&C 34:2 (December 7, 1830).

²⁶³ Old Testament Manuscript 2, 119, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

²⁶⁴ 1835 D&C 50:2; LDS D&C 27:9; RLDS D&C 26:2.

²⁶⁵ Joseph Smith journal, 193, Church History Library, in Jessee, Ashurst-McGee, and Jensen, *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839*, 222; LDS D&C 110:16.



The hill in the township of Manchester, Ontario County, New York

In Smith's longest account he stated that in September 1823 a vision was opened to his mind, he saw where gold plates were deposited, and he would go on to remove them from the ground four years later in September 1827.

One of the earliest persons who heard the story from Joseph Jr. was Joseph Knight Sr., a resident of Colesville, New York. Knight, for whom Smith worked briefly in 1825–26, recounted elements of the early story, as related to him in the fall of 1826. Joseph Smith while at the hill was told by the personage:

you Should have took the Book and a gone right away you cant have it now Joseph Says when Can I have it[?] the answer was the 22nt Day of September next if you Bring the right person with you Joseph Says who is the right person[?] the answer was your oldest Brother²⁶⁶

Joseph Smith's mother Lucy added her own recollections about the gold record in her memoir. She dated Joseph's first trip to the nearby hill as just before the death of Alvin, who died in November 1823, and emphasized Alvin's place in these events.

In the excitement of the moment he laid the record down in order to cover up the box least some one should come along and take away whatever else might be deposited there. When he turned again to take up the record it was gone but where he knew not nor did he know by what means it was taken away.²⁶⁷

Mother Smith reported that Alvin was especially interested in the record. She stated that on his deathbed he had told Joseph, "I want you to be a good boy & do everything that lays in your power to obtain the records be faithful in receiving

²⁶⁶ Joseph Knight, "Reminiscences," written between 1835 and his death in 1847, Church History Library. See Dean C. Jessee, ed., "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies* 17 (Autumn 1976): 30.

²⁶⁷ Lucy Mack Smith, draft manuscript, Church History Library. See Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 346–47.

instruction and keeping every commandment that is given you.”²⁶⁸ In his redaction Joseph Smith omitted laying the record on the ground, “I made an attempt to take them [the gold plates] out but was forbidden by the messenger.”²⁶⁹ He also did not mention being told on that occasion to bring Alvin with him next time to the hill. Six years earlier, in 1832, Smith said he attempted but did not remove the plates as he “straightway made three attempts to get them.”²⁷⁰ The early story told by his mother Lucy, and friend Joseph Knight, Sr., indicated that Joseph said he removed the record and laid it down.

At the hill in 1827 and the fallen treetop

Another redaction as revealed by Joseph Knight Sr. was the time when Joseph Smith finally asked when he could have the book and was told again to bring the right person. “Joseph Says who is the right Person[?] the answer was you will know then he looked in his glass and found it was Emma Hale.”²⁷¹ According to Lucy Smith’s narrative, on September 20, 1827, Joseph Knight Sr. and his friend Josiah Stowell arrived at the Smith family frame house. Knight said that he had heard that Joseph was to get the record on September 22.²⁷²

On the morning of the twenty-second, according to the narrative, Joseph and Emma left the Smith home, “taking Mr. Knight’s horse and wagon” without his knowledge, to travel to the hill about two miles away.²⁷³ When they arrived at the hill, Joseph left Emma with the wagon while he went to the side of the hill. Joseph said he then took the plates out of the box in the ground and hid them in a fallen treetop, concealing them with the bark of the tree.²⁷⁴ He then reportedly returned to Knight’s wagon where Emma was waiting, and they started back to the house.

The plates were now, according to Joseph, hidden in a fallen treetop, but a better place to deposit them was needed. According to Lucy, Joseph “asked my advice what it was best to do about getting a chest made.” They decided to have one made but lacked the money to pay for it.²⁷⁵

It was nine days later when Joseph ostensibly walked by himself to where he said he hid the gold plates. Several people remember the story they heard of how he brought the plates back to the Smith home. According to Lucy’s version, Joseph:

took the plates from their [hiding] place and wrapping them in his linen frock put them under his arm and started for the house.... he concluded it would be safer to

²⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, 352.

²⁶⁹ Manuscript History A-1:7; Joseph Smith-History 1:53 in Pearl of Great Price.

²⁷⁰ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:8.

²⁷¹ Joseph Knight, “Reminiscences,” Church History Library. Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection, 30.”

²⁷² Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 376. See Jessee, “Joseph Knight’s Recollection,” 31.

²⁷³ Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 376.

²⁷⁴ This follows Martin Harris in *Tiffany’s Monthly* 5 (August 1859): 165 and Affidavit of Willard Chase, December 11, 1833, in E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, OH: privately printed), 246.

²⁷⁵ Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 379. Lucy stated, “There was not a shilling in the house.”

go across through the woods.... He had not proceeded far in this direction till, as he was jumping over a log, a man spran[g] up and gave him a heavy blow with a gun. Joseph <leveled> him to the ground.²⁷⁶

Smith claimed he knocked down several men as he ran home, arriving out of breath. When all the commotion settled, Joseph showed those present his dislocated thumb, which his father put back in place. After this Joseph went to Willard Chase's house and talked with him. Chase recalled the story that Smith told him, which is similar to the accounts of Smith's mother and Joseph Knight:

On his return home, he said he was attacked by two men in the woods, and knocked them both down and made his escape, arrived safe and secured his treasure.—He then observed that if it had not been for that stone, (which he acknowledged belonged to me,) he would not have obtained the book.²⁷⁷

This interesting story was not included in any of Smith's accounts. Whatever was under his work smock or in the chest was concealed. Other members of the Smith family did not see a physical object. None of the scribes indicate that Smith used the gold plates during the dictation of the Book of Mormon.

The Gold Plates

How necessary the gold plates story was to the process of writing the Book of Mormon is a valid question for further study. A recent author, Brant A. Gardner, stated that the translation process "did not include the physical examination of the plates as part of the translation."²⁷⁸ Over time Joseph Smith omitted certain elements and expanded the words said to have been told him, thereby changing the story from how it was first told. From the visionary instructions originally told in a treasure-seeking context Smith transformed that initial story into a religious saga featuring an angel guiding him into a prophetic ministry. The prophetic saga from the earliest days of the movement reinforced his followers' belief that he was a prophet. This story was that important.

A great way to understand how a story can change is to know that the Smith family was considered visionary. That is, through the eyes of their understanding or second sight, they perceived hidden treasures underground, in the mountains, and in caves. This perception was the mindset of their treasuring-seeking projects and also their religious thinking. While the Book of Mormon was being printed, Solomon Chamberlain visited members of the Smith family. He recounts his first contact with them:

²⁷⁶ Ibid., 386.

²⁷⁷ Affidavit of Willard Chase, December 11, 1833, in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 246.

²⁷⁸ Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and Power: Translating the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2011), 134. In note 37 Gardner explains: "The number of testimonies about the face-in-the-hat method indicate that, even if the plates were nearby, Joseph was not consulting them during the translation."

I soon arrived at the house, and found Hyrum [Smith] walking the floor; as I entered the room, I said peace be to this house; he looked at me and said "I hope it will be peace." I then said is there any one here that believes in visions and revelations. He said yes, we are a visionary house.²⁷⁹

Summary on Revelations and Story

In Joseph Smith's history he omitted his use of a stone in locating buried treasure, in finding the gold plates, in interpreting Egyptian writing, and in receiving revelatory messages. He added in 1838-39 that he was using the Urim and Thummim in "translating" and also in receiving revelations for his followers.

Joseph Smith, like many other leaders, showed development in expressing his ideas. As the recollection of events in his early life took on a more theological bent than historical reality, his story grew in the telling. The words that he said an angel had spoken to him about Elijah in 1823 became of primary significance as he looked back to his early life. It was not an issue to him that some of his ideas had changed or contradicted what he had said at an earlier time. Joseph was able to reinterpret events as he presented new ideas in a revelatory manner. As an oracle to his followers, he came to see his theological development become the word of God. And as he developed his thought, he introduced new meaning and understanding to church members in his newly adopted role as prophet and seer.

These two Mormon examples, on revelatory messages and storytelling, usually have negligible impact on the believer because critical studies play minimal roles in the final authorized text. To the faithful all that is important is how the official story is told.

²⁷⁹ Recorded in John Taylor journal; in Dean C. Jessee, ed., "The John Taylor Nauvoo Journal: January 1845-September 1845," *BYU Studies* 23 (Summer 1983): 45.

The First Vision Stories: Their History and Development²⁸⁰

Significant discrepancies in events and dates exist among accounts of the seminal events of the Restoration. During the decade of the 1830s, several versions of Joseph Smith Jr.'s reports of visions were recorded, each presenting a different perspective. This article explores the variations in the main accounts of Joseph Smith's recollections of his early visionary experiences and the corresponding changes in perception this produced among his followers in the course of their ministries.

Soon after the Joseph Smith Sr. family arrived in Palmyra, Ontario County, New York, young Joseph Jr. studied the Bible with particular interest in its underlying themes. In 1832 he wrote of his recollections of the year 1817 or 1818, "At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously imprest [sic; impressed] with regard to the all important [sic; important] concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul, which led me to searching the scriptures."²⁸¹ With curiosity about several protestant denominations, he attended a debating club and was a lay exhorter in a Methodist class.²⁸²

When his father had a disagreement with Jeremiah Hurlbut, Joseph, thirteen years old, testified in the court trial.²⁸³ He attended school off and on and worked to help support his family.²⁸⁴ It is possible he may have had more than one first vision, as the backgrounds to his recorded recollections are different in each case.

On April 6, 1830, at Manchester, New York, Joseph pronounced a revelation that the church should keep a record. First to begin one was Oliver Cowdery, followed by John Whitmer. While the Cowdery history is not extant, Whitmer's history begins on the occasion when missionaries were assigned to preach to the Lamanites (Native Americans) in September and October 1830. Cowdery later wrote a series of letters that described several prior events leading up to the publication of the Book of Mormon in Palmyra, New York, in March 1830. Church missionaries during the 1830s preached about an angel revealing to Joseph Smith the location of plates of gold but had no knowledge of any earlier vision.

²⁸⁰ First published in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 41 (Spring/Summer 2021).

²⁸¹ "A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.," Joseph Smith Letter book 1:1-2, MS 155, Box 2, Folder 1, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark-AshurstMcGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *The Joseph Smith Papers, Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832-1844* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2012), 11.

²⁸² O[rsamus]. Turner, *History of the Pioneer Settlement of Phelps and Gorham's Purchase* (Rochester: Published by William Alling, 1851), 214.

²⁸³ February 6, 1819, "Court of Common Pleas 1819, Narratio," AM01-185, Box 11203, County Records Center and Archives, Canandaigua, New York.

²⁸⁴ H. Michael Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844*, rev. 2nd ed. (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2013), 21, 71.

Forgiveness of Sins

Joseph Smith in his youth worked as a treasure seer by showing money-diggers where there were treasures to be located in the ground and hills in the southern New York township of Manchester and in northern Pennsylvania. This was considered unsavory because no treasures were ever located.²⁸⁵

From the historical record relating to a March 20, 1826, court examination, or trial, it was evident that Joseph was found guilty because no treasure was found. He then evidently saw the need to turn his life around.²⁸⁶ The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ approved in June 1830 mentions the first elder (Joseph Smith) receiving forgiveness and support to translate the Book of Mormon:

For after that it truly was manifested unto this first Elder that he had received a remission of his Sins he was entangled again in the vanities of the world but after truly repenting god ministered unto him by an Holy angel whose countenance was as lightning & whose garments were pure & white above all whiteness & gave unto him commandments which inspired him from on high & gave unto him power by the means which were before prepa[red] that he should translate a Book²⁸⁷

By 1831 John Whitmer was appointed to keep a history of the new church, but he did not begin his account until later. In 1838 Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon wrote to Whitmer asking for the record. When Whitmer refused, they commenced to write their own history. But this new history did not include an important record written by Joseph himself in 1832.

1832 Recollection of Joseph Smith's Early Life

In January 1832, Joseph Smith was ordained president of the high priesthood. Later that year Smith began dictating and recording his early history as church leader. The account began with a foreword describing certain events in his young life. His scribe Frederick G. Williams wrote (with some spelling of words corrected in brackets):

<firstly> he receiving the testamony [testimony] from on high secondly the ministering of Angels thirdly the reception of the holy Priesthood by the ministring of — Aangels [Angels] to adminster the letter of the Law <Gospel--> <--the Law and commandments as they were given unto him--> and in <the> ordinencs [ordinances], forthly a confirmation and reception of the high Priesthood after the holy order of the son of the living God power and ordinance

²⁸⁵ Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844*, 33-35.

²⁸⁶ Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844*, 40-45.

²⁸⁷ Zebedee Coltrin Journal, MS 1443, Church History Library; H. Michael Marquardt, *Joseph Smith's 1828-1843 Revelations* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2013), 58; Book of Commandments 24:6-7; LDS Doctrine and Covenants 20:5-8; RLDS Doctrine and Covenants 17:2.

from on high to preach the Gospel in the administration and demonstration of the Spirit the Keys [Keys] of the Kingdom of God conferred upon him²⁸⁸

Joseph then recorded that he had searched the scriptures years earlier. He concluded that the “different denominations” did not live by “a holy walk,” writing in his own hand:

from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart concerning the situation of the world of mankind the contentions and divi[sions] the wicke[d]ness and abominations and the darkness which pervaded the minds of mankind my mind become exce[e]dingly distressed for I become convicted of my sins and by searching the scriptures I found that <mankind> did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and liveing faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament and I felt to mourn for my own sins and for the sins of the world.²⁸⁹

Joseph went into a “wilderness” and prayed. He said that he had a heavenly vision and saw the Lord and heard the following words:

Joseph <my son> thy sins are forgiven thee. go thy <way> walk in my statutes and keep my commandments behold I am the Lord of glory I was crucified for the world that all those who believe on my name may have Eternal life <behold> the world lieth in sin at this time and none doeth good no not one they have turned asside from the gospel and keep not commandments they draw near to me with their lips while their hearts are far from me and mine anger is kindling against the inhabitants of the earth to visit them ac[c]ording to th[e]ir ungodliness and to bring to pass that which <hath> been spoken by the mouth of the prophets and Ap[ostles] behold and lo I come quickly as it [is] written of me in the cloud in the glory of my Father²⁹⁰

Though a few words are common in the histories, this writing is not known to have been used for his later manuscript history. Aside from some copies of his early revelations, this 1832 document is the earliest known history written in part by Joseph Smith. Notably, it was not until about 1965 that this story became generally known to historians.

Oliver Cowdery’s Letters

While living in Kirtland, Ohio, Oliver Cowdery wrote a series of letters that covered the “history of the rise and progress of the church of the Latter Day Saints.” Cowdery, evidently obtaining his information from Joseph himself, wrote of “a great awaking” and of Methodist

²⁸⁸ “A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.,” 1 (angled brackets <> indicate word(s) written above the line), in *JSP, HI*:10.

²⁸⁹ “A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.,” 2, *JSP, HI*: 11-12.

²⁹⁰ “A History of the life of Joseph Smith Jr.,” 3, *JSP, HI*: 13.

elder George Lane who visited the Palmyra area. But rather than placing the ministry correctly into the latter part of 1824, Cowdery placed it into 1820 or 1821 in the fifteenth year of Joseph's life:

One Mr. Lane, a presiding Elder of the Methodist church, visited Palmyra, and vicinity. Elder Lane was a tallented [sic] man possessing a good share of literary endowments, and apparent humility. There was a great awakening, or excitement raised on the subject of religion, and much enquiry for the word of life. Large additions were made to the Methodist, Presbyterian, and Baptist churches.—Mr. Lane's manner of communication was peculiarly calculated to awaken the intellect of the hearer, and arouse the sinner to look about him for safety—much good instruction was always drawn from his discourses on the scriptures, and in common with others, our brother's mind became awakened . . . In this general strife for followers, his mother, one sister, and two of his natural brothers, were persuaded to unite with the Presbyterians.²⁹¹

Oliver Cowdery wrote that Joseph's mother united with the Presbyterians, paralleling the event cited in Lucy Smith's own history about joining a church. In February 1835 Cowdery made what he termed a correction "in the type" to Joseph's seventeenth year, which would have been in 1822. But Cowdery mentions the year as 1823 concerning the excitement or revival in Palmyra.²⁹²

The statement by Oliver Cowdery would now bring new focus to the evening of September 21, 1823, almost two months before Alvin Smith's death in November. Although his letters related to Joseph's early religious experience, Cowdery mentioned only an angel and did not give details of any earlier vision.

Personal Interview with Robert Matthews in November 1835

During 1834-35, the church presidency prepared a series of theological lectures that were to be used for instruction in the school of elders. The seven theological lectures on faith were included as the first seventy pages of the 1835 first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, its doctrinal portion. This included the fifth lecture, defining the Godhead as two personages (the Father and the Son) with the Holy Spirit bearing record of them.

The wording of some of the early revelations underwent modification and were printed in the covenants-and-commandments part of the Doctrine and Covenants. These included revisions relating to events leading up to the Book of Mormon. No objections were raised to modifying content of revelations for this new book of regulations for the church.²⁹³

In describing his early religious experiences in 1835, Joseph Smith now expanded and

²⁹¹ "Letter III. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (December 1834), 42, Kirtland, Ohio.

²⁹² "Letter IV. To W. W. Phelps, Esq.," *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1 (February 1835), 78.

²⁹³ H. Michael, Marquardt, "Changing Revelatory Messages: A Mormon Example," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 33 (Spring/Summer 2013):122-39.

modified his former story. This could be seen through an interview he had with Robert Matthews, a stranger who called himself “Joshua the Jewish minister” (also “Matthias the Prophet”). As will be explained, the recorded interview was later omitted from his manuscript history.

The Matthews interview was conducted at Kirtland, Ohio, on November 9, 1835. It was transcribed into Joseph’s journal by Warren Parrish and may have been reconstructed from notes or memory. According to the journal, Joseph gave Matthews “a relation of the circumstances connected with the coming forth of the book of Mormon, as follows”:

I knew not who was right or who was wrong. . . I retired to the silent grove and bow[e] d down before the Lord, under a realising [sic; realizing] sense that he had said (if the bible be true) ask and you shall receive[,] knock and it shall be opened[,] seek and you shall find and again, if any man lack wisdom let him ask of God who giveth to all men libarally and upbradeth not; information was what I most desired at this time, and with a fixed determination to obtain it, I called upon the Lord for the first time, in the place above stated . . . I called on the Lord in mighty prayer, a pillar of fire appeared above my head, it presently rested down upon , and filled me with joy unspeakable, a personage appeared in the midst, of this pillar of flame which was spread all around, and yet nothing consumed, another personage soon appear[e]d like unto the first, he said unto me thy sins are forgiven thee, he testified unto me that Jesus Christ is the son of God; I was about 14. years old when I received this first communication; When I was about 17 years old I saw another vision of angels, in the night season²⁹⁴

It is clear from the text that Smith has now modified his 1832 visions of seeing the Lord and of an angel revealing the Book of Mormon. Instead, Smith has dropped the excitement of religion mentioned in Oliver Cowdery’s letter prior to his answer to prayer and has added the idea of seeing two personages in the vision following the lectures on theology. The story was now his own and not Cowdery’s. Even though the events themselves had occurred prior to the organization of the church itself, the matter would be regarded as an authoritative part of the rise of the latter-day church. As noted above, Joseph’s remarks to Matthews were recorded in his journal with the phrase, “as follows,” but later in 1843, this was edited out and replaced it with the words, “as recorded in the former part of this history.”²⁹⁵ Five days later on November 14, Joseph dated his earliest experience to visitor Erastus Holmes as: “up to the time I received the first visitation of Angels which was when I was about 14, years old.”²⁹⁶

²⁹⁴ Joseph Smith 1835-36 Journal, 23-24; MS 155, Box 1, Folder 2, Joseph Smith collection, Church History Library; Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832- 1839* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 87-88.

²⁹⁵ Omitted in Manuscript History, Book B-1:637, CR 100 102, Historian’s Office History of the Church, Church History Library. Written in September 1843 by Willard Richards.

²⁹⁶ Joseph Smith 1835-36 Journal, 37; *JSP, J1*:100. Though the wording was retained in B-1:642, by 1904 the journal entry omitted reference about angels and the text was changed to “the time I received my first vision.” *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1904), 2:312, edited by B. H. Roberts.

1839 Manuscript History of Joseph Smith

Before the expulsion from Missouri in 1838, it was preached that the Book of Mormon story had been the founding event of the Restoration. But during a fourday stretch that year, Joseph Smith, counselor Sidney Rigdon, and clerk George W. Robinson drafted a new account of Joseph's history since John Whitmer would not relinquish his history. Unfortunately, this original draft is not extant. However, the following year James Mulholland, another scribe, copied that 1838 draft into what became known as the Manuscript History of the Church, Book A-1. It seems clear that this endeavor was conducted primarily for theological purposes on the part of Smith, Rigdon, Robinson and/or a combination of the three.

This remains the longest and most detailed account of all, though not the last that Joseph Smith would relate to others. It describes his first vision account with the words: "When the light rested upon me I saw two personages." Since one of the two personages spoke the words, "This is my beloved Son, Hear him," the scene has been interpreted as a vision of two personages, God the Father and His Son Jesus Christ.

In this story, the Palmyra revival is placed as a motivating factor leading to Joseph's visionary experience. The account mentions that the revival ("an unusual excitement on the subject of religion") took place in the second year after his father's family move to Manchester Township (or about 1822). This would place the excitement on religion about 1824. The dating of the first vision was explained as happening early in the spring of 1820 and not to the time of the Palmyra revival. These two events should not have been included together in the story. They were two events separated by a number of years.²⁹⁷

Book A-1 was revised both before and after its first publication and is now considered to be Joseph's official narrative. An important feature was contained in parenthesis, where it is stated "for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong." This story incorporates an account of Joseph's early religious calling and has since served as the basis for virtually all official and semi-official histories of the Restoration. The following extracts are from the Manuscript History written in 1839 by James Mulholland before it was edited for publication in the March 15, 1842, issue of the Times and Seasons as "History of Joseph Smith":

Sometime in the second year after our removal to Manchester, there was in the place where we lived an unusual excitement on the subject of religion. It commenced with the Methodists, but soon became general among all the sects in that region of country, indeed the whole district of Country seemed affected by it and great multitudes united themselves to the different religious parties, which created no small stir and division among the people, Some Crying, "Lo here" and some Lo there. Some were contending for the Methodist faith, Some for the Presbyterian, and some for the Baptist . . .

I was at this time in my fifteenth year. My Fathers family was proselyted to the Presbyterian faith and four of them joined that Church, Namely, My Mother

297 H. Michael Marquardt, "The Palmyra Revival of 1824-25, From Methodist, Presbyterian and Baptist Records: Its Impact on the Restoration Movement," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 40 (Spring/Summer 2020):39-47.

Lucy, My Brothers Hyrum, Samuel Harrison, and my Sister Soph[r]onia. . . . I attended their several meetings as occasion would permit. But in [the] process of time my mind became somewhat partial to the Methodist sect

. . .

While I was laboring under the extreme difficulties caused by the contests of these parties of religionists, I was one day reading the Epistle of James, First Chapter and fifth verse which reads, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him.["] Never did any passage of scripture come with more power to the heart of man that [than] this did at this time to mine. It seemed to enter with great force into every feeling of my heart. I reflected on it again and again, knowing that if any person needed wisdom from God, I did, for how to act I did not know and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had [I] would never know, for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passage of Scripture so differently as destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible. . . . I retired to the woods to make the attempt. It was on the morning of a beautiful clear day early in the spring of Eighteen hundred and twenty. It was the first time in my life that I had such an attempt, for amidst all anxieties I had never as yet made the attempt to pray vocally.

. . .

I saw a pillar light exactly over my head above the brightness of the sun, which descended gradually untill it fell upon me. It no sooner appeared than I found myself delivered from the enemy which held me bound. When the light rested upon me I saw two personages (whose brightness and glory defy all description) standing above me in the air. One of spake unto me calling me by name and said (pointing to the other) "This is my beloved Son, Hear him." My object in going to enquire of the Lord was to know which of all the sects was right, that I might know which to join. No sooner therefore did I get possession of myself so as to be able to speak, than I asked the personages who stood above me in the light, which of all the sects was right, (for at this time it had never entered into my heart that all were wrong) and which I should join.

I was answered that I must join none of them, for they were all wrong, and the Personage who addressed me said that all their Creeds were an abomination in his sight, that those professors were all corrupt, that "they draw near to me with their lips but their hearts are far from me, They teach for doctrines the commandments of men, having a form of Godliness but they deny the power thereof."²⁹⁸

The Palmyra 1824-25 revival appears to have been an important event for Joseph Smith. It was after his brother Alvin died. It was also the time when family members joined the Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra. Though Joseph may have had a religious experience of forgiveness of sins, it did not appear to have had a lasting effect upon him since his visions of

²⁹⁸ Manuscript History, Book A-1:1-3, CR 100 102, Historian's Office History of the Church, Church History Library. JSP, H1: 208, 210, 212, 214. "History of Joseph Smith," *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 15, 1842), 727-28; 3 (April 1, 1842), 748, Nauvoo, Illinois.

Jesus and angels did not cause a change in his treasure-digging activity. His early story also included the instructions to bring someone with him in order to obtain the plates and information relating to the forthcoming Book of Mormon.

The first published pamphlet about the first vision was written by church apostle Orson Pratt in 1840. He wrote that Joseph Smith “was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in their features or likeness. He was informed, that his sins were forgiven.”²⁹⁹

Conclusion

Joseph Smith’s accounts evolved over time. The story in his first history featured the receipt of personal forgiveness and an angelic call to a prophetic ministry. The story then sequentially evolved from a heavenly vision of Jesus, to an apparition of two separate individuals appearing one after the other, and finally to the simultaneous appearance of the two. The earlier 1832 history was removed by cutting the pages out of the manuscript record—but not lost. The later November 1835 story was edited out of the official history in 1843, leaving the 1839 history as the canonical theological writing by Joseph himself.

By introducing the Palmyra revival in both Oliver Cowdery’s letters and the 1839 history, when his mother Lucy and other family members joined the local Presbyterian Church, a chronological and historical problem was created. This final account is thus more theological than historical through its creation of reasons why Joseph did not join any church at the time. In this new message, he was told that the local churches were an abomination and that he must not join any of them. Another novel issue in the 1839 history was the assertion that Joseph had been rudely persecuted at the time of his vision for discussing them publicly. It is possible that Joseph could have been subtly drawing a parallel to the persecution that Latter-day Saints were then experiencing in Missouri and Ohio.

While Joseph Smith’s final version would now explain why he himself did not join a church, it still seems problematic that family members did in fact unite with the Presbyterians at the time. Indeed, many identical Christian teachings of those local churches are contained within the church’s 1830 Articles and Covenants.

The First Vision was not part of the early Restoration message. Early missionaries knew only of the angel and the Book of Mormon.³⁰⁰ Church members were not to put their trust in Joseph Smith’s personal visionary experiences. Smith made mistakes both before and after founding his church, which may assist in explaining why different branches of the Restoration exist today.

²⁹⁹ Orson Pratt, *An Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions, and of the Late Discovery of Ancient American Records* (Edinburgh: Printed by Ballantyne and Hughes, 1840), 4-5. The pamphlet included “a sketch of the faith and doctrine of this Church.” Some of the wording of this pamphlet was incorporated into a letter to John Wentworth published in 1842. “Church History,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1, 1842), 706-709.

³⁰⁰ See for example, William Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt, *Lost Apostles: Forgotten Members of Mormonism’s Original Quorum of Twelve* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014), 43-44, 377, 382, 385, 390-91.

The Joseph Smith Bible Project

Background

The belief of Joseph Smith was that the gospel of Jesus Christ contained in the New Testament consisted of the same essential beliefs and ordinances practiced since the beginning of humankind. The sacred texts revealed through Smith explained that if it was necessary to believe in Jesus now, then Adam and other Old Testament patriarchs would have believed like the followers of Jesus in New Testament times. The same idea goes with the practice of the ordinances of Christian baptism, confirmation, and priesthood ordination.

Joseph Smith was a student of the Bible. In his 1832 account he wrote about his search of the scriptures. Joseph recorded: “At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously imprest [impressed] with regard to the all important [important] concerns for the welfare [welfare] of my immortal Soul which led me to searching the scriptures believeing [believing] as I was taught, that they contained the word of God.”³⁰¹

The 1830 Book of Mormon contains Christian ideas incorporated as prophetic insights into the life of Jesus such as his birth and baptism.³⁰² The text of a reported ancient vision proclaimed that many plain and precious things had been removed from the Bible. An angel explained: “thou seest the foundation of a great and abominable church, which is most abominable above all other churches; for behold, they have taken away from the Gospel of the Lamb, many parts which are plain and most precious; and also, many Covenants of the Lord have they taken away; and all this have they done, that they might pervert the right ways of the Lord.”³⁰³

King James Version Purchased and Revision Manuscripts

In October 1829 Oliver Cowdery purchased a large leather-bound edition of the King James Version of the Bible (KJV) at Egbert B. Grandin’s Bookstore in Palmyra, New York. At the time Joseph Smith was residing in Pennsylvania. The Bible was published in Cooperstown, New York, by H. and E. Phinney Company in 1828. This printing included the Apocrypha. This KJV 1828 Bible became the textual basis for the revision.³⁰⁴

Joseph Smith usually added words to biblical texts. There are four main handwritten manuscripts of the Bible project, some containing copied material. At first the complete text was written on the manuscript. Later just those passages that were revised are included on the

³⁰¹ “A History of the Life of Joseph Smith Jr.,” 1-2, in Karen Lynn Davidson, David J. Whittaker, Mark-Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Histories, Volume 1: Joseph Smith Histories, 1832-1844* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2012), 11.

³⁰² 1830 Book of Mormon, 24-25; LDS 1 Nephi 11:13-27.

³⁰³ 1830 Book of Mormon, 30; LDS 1 Nephi 13:26-27. The original BOM manuscript reads, “formation of that great & abominable church.” The Printer’s manuscript has, “foundation of a great & abominable Church.” There was no unified organization that controlled biblical texts.

³⁰⁴ The KJV Bible and various manuscripts are located in the Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri.

manuscript pages and sometimes markings in the Bible.³⁰⁵ Joseph Smith started his revision with Genesis, then stopped and revised Matthew through Revelation. Afterward he returned to Genesis and worked through Malachi. Over a period of three years (1830-33), Smith revised and also reviewed the manuscripts. New Testament manuscript 2 contains four gatherings or folios. The following chart shows the division of the original manuscripts:

Old Testament	Text Includes	Dates of Original Work
OT 1 (61 pages)	Genesis 1:1 to 24:41	June 1830 to March 1831
OT 2 (119 pages)	pages 1-59 copy of OT 1 Genesis 24:41 to Malachi 4	July 1832 to July 1833
New Testament	Text Includes	Dates of Original Work
NT 1 (63 pages)	Matthew 1 to 26:71	March to June 1831
NT 2, folio 1 (pages 1-49)	copy of NT 1	
NT 2, folio 2 (pages 1-48)	Matt. 26:1 to Luke 1:74	Sept. 1831 to Winter 1831-32
NT 2, folio 3 (pages 49-92)	Luke 1:75 to Luke 19:40	Winter 1831-32
NT 2, folio 4 (pages 93-154)	Luke 19:41 to Rev. 22	Jan./Feb. to July 1832

As noted above Joseph Smith spent time during 1830-33 correcting the KJV Bible. The project has been known as the Inspired Version, Joseph Smith Revision, or the Joseph Smith Translation (JST). The JST is Joseph Smith's doctrinal correction ("translation") of the Old and New Testaments.³⁰⁶ The word "translation" was used to explain changes in the English text. It does not restore the Hebrew or Greek biblical text.

The King James Bible (KJV) was used for as a text-triggered type of "revelation" as Smith considered problems as he read from the English text of the KJV. This revision was one among many during the nineteenth century. Part of the text has been published only in the English language in 1867.

From an examination of the manuscripts, it is apparent that the handwritten corrections are not always complete. Not all of the notations on the manuscript pages were included when printed. In a few places Smith wrote the text himself. Sometimes italic words in the KJV Bible were crossed out, meaning they should be omitted. Many of the Hebrew Scriptures (commonly called the Old Testament) were considered "correct."

The First Book of Moses Called Genesis

It had been asserted by European biblical scholars that Moses could not have been the writer of Genesis. In June 1830 Joseph Smith received a new revelation originally given to

³⁰⁵ The Bible has markings (including strike through of italic words) starting at OT Genesis chapter 25 and NT John chapter 6.

³⁰⁶ For members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints two items are printed in the *Pearl of Great Price*: Selections from the Book of Moses [KJV Genesis 1:1 - 6:13] and Joseph Smith - Matthew [KJV Matt. 23:39 and chapter 24].

Moses, previously unknown, that refuted this theory. This revelation began, “The words of God which he <spake> unto Moses.”³⁰⁷ In the revelation, Smith said Moses was told:

And now Moses my Son I will speak unto you concerning this Earth upon which thou standest & thou shalt write the things which I shall speak & in a day when the children of men shall esteem my words as naught & take many of them from the Book which thou shalt write behold I will raise up another like unto thee [Moses] & they shall be had again among the Children of men among even as many as shall believe. . . . And now they are also spoken unto you [Joseph Smith] shew them not unto any except them that believe³⁰⁸

Joseph Smith’s job was to recover the words that were removed from the Bible. The opening portion of chapter 1 of Genesis as revealed “to the Elders of the Church of Christ,” circa June 1830, was rendered:

And it came to pass that the Lord spake unto Moses saying Behold I reveal unto you concerning this Heaven & this Earth write the words which I speak I am the beginning & the end the Almighty God by mine only begotten I created these things yea in the beginning I created the Heaven & the Earth upon which thou standest³⁰⁹

The text utilized is the KJV book of Genesis. This is evident since the revision follows the order of that text except for added material. Two examples of additional information are as follows:

in that day the Holy Ghost fell upon Adam which bore record of the Father & the Son saying I am Jesus Christ from the beginning henceforth & forever³¹⁰

A revision that reflected some concern for the Masonic fraternity when Joseph Smith dictated the revealed words includes these words:

satan saith unto Cain swear unto me by thy throat & if thou tell it thou shalt die & swear thy brethren by their heads & by the living God that they tell it not for if they tell it they shall surely die & this that thy father may not know it & this day I will deliver thy brother Abel into thine hands & Satan <swore> unto Cain that he

³⁰⁷ OT Manuscript 1, p. 1, with two manuscripts of the Old Testament; LDS Moses 1:1.

³⁰⁸ OT 1, 3; Compare LDS Moses 1:40-42.

³⁰⁹ OT 1, 3; LDS Moses 2:1. Though there is no first-person account such as “I Moses,” like the Book of Mormon, there still is an indication by Joseph Smith that Genesis had been dictated by inspiration in the words “I God” or “I the Lord God” in the first five chapters of Genesis. Compare OT 1, 3-10; OT 2, 4-9; LDS Moses 2:1-5:40 with Gen. 1:1-5:25 (KJV).

³¹⁰ OT 1, 8; LDS Moses 5:9. Compare Gen. 3:24-4:1 (KJV). This text was included when copied onto OT 2, 10 and afterwards “Jesus Christ” was crossed out and “the only begotten of the father” added above the line.

would do according to his commands & all these things were done in secret & Cain saith truly I am Mahon the master of this great secret that I may murder & get gain Wherefore Cain was called master Mahon & he gloried in his wickedness.³¹¹

When Peter Bauder visited the town of Fayette, New York, in October 1830, he examined the ten-page manuscript of the revision of Genesis and gave a negative assessment:

The manner in which it was written is as follows:—he [Joseph Smith] commenced at the first chapter of Genesis, he wrote a few verses of scripture, then added delusion, which he added every few verses of scripture, and so making a compound of scripture and delusion. On my interrogating him on the subject, he professed to be inspired by the Holy Ghost to write it.³¹²

Making Genesis a Christian Document

A revision with new material that included another reinterpretation of Genesis showed that baptism was being preached by Noah:

And it came to pass that Noah continued his preaching unto the people saying hearken and give heed unto my words <beleive [believe]> and repent of your sins and be Baptized in the name of Jesus christ the Son of God even as our fathers did and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost³¹³

The majority of Christian concepts and ordinances added to the Old Testament of the Hebrew Scriptures occur in the first seventeen chapters of Genesis. This stops after chapter 17 and with no Christian material used for the remainder of Genesis or the rest of the Old Testaments with one exception. There is a brief mention of Christ in Isaiah 29.

Joseph Smith used the Book of Mormon text for part of Genesis 50 to include a prophecy of Joseph of Egypt.³¹⁴ In Isaiah 29 there is a prophecy regarding the coming forth of the Book of Mormon from 2 Nephi that was incorporated into the biblical text.³¹⁵ These textual additions are not supported by Hebrew manuscripts of Genesis or Isaiah.

A December 1830 revelation considered the Bible revision as a translation, saying, “it is not expedient in me that ye should translate any more until ye shall go to the [state of] Ohio.”³¹⁶

³¹¹ OT 1, 9; LDS Moses 5:29-31. When the text was copied "Mahon" was spelled "Mahan" (OT 2, 12). Compare Genesis 4:7-8 (KJV). See also OT 1, 10; LDS Moses 5:49.

³¹² Peter Bauder, *The Kingdom and Gospel of Jesus Christ: Contrasted with That of Anti-Christ* (Canajoharie, New York: Printed by A. H. Calhoun, 1834), 37.

³¹³ OT 1, 20; LDS Moses 8:23-24. Compare Genesis 6:5-6 (KJV).

³¹⁴ Compare 1830 Book of Mormon, 66-67; LDS 2 Nephi 3:5-18. See Genesis 50:24 (KJV) for traditional text.

³¹⁵ Compare 1830 Book of Mormon, 110-111; LDS 2 Nephi 27:7-23. See Isaiah 29:11-13 (KJV).

³¹⁶ LDS Doctrine and Covenants 37:1.

As far as known, Smith did not consult a Hebrew text for Genesis. The Bible revision is better understood as corrections, and where additions were made, as an expansion of the biblical text.

As anyone knows who has tried to accurately copy a text, it is very easy to omit a line or two in the copying process. When ancient scribes copied manuscripts, they often accidentally omitted words. The revision made by Joseph Smith attempts to make the wording of the KJV English clearer. The additions by Smith are a reflection of his encounter with the text in the context of revelatory messages as the latter-day gospel was being restored in 1830-33. Smith's revision of the Bible was produced as a church text for those who believe the restored gospel.

Since Joseph Smith did not have knowledge of Hebrew or Greek during this period of Bible revision, we should not expect his revision to contain readings in ancient biblical manuscripts. Nor should we think that his revision is any kind of restoration of what was in the Hebrew Scriptures or in the Greek New Testament. Joseph Smith's work is a revision rather than a translation, since church members knew that Joseph Smith had not studied Hebrew or Greek to produce his manuscript. But church members also thought that Joseph did not have to know Hebrew or Greek because he indicated his corrections were by revelation.

Joseph Smith's additions to Genesis illustrate the belief that the New Testament gospel was taught and practiced in Old Testament times. Smith in essence made Genesis a Christian document: "& thus the Gospel began to be preached from the begin[n]ing being declared by Holy Angels sent forth from the presence of God & by his own voice & by the Gift of the Holy Ghost & thus all things were confirmed & the Gospel preached & a decree sent forth that it should be in the World until the end thereof & thus it was."³¹⁷

Later when Joseph Smith revised John 1:1 he included, "In the begin[n]ing was the gospel preached through the son. And the gospel was the word."³¹⁸ This was a constant theme throughout Smith's life.

Most of the Old Testament was considered Correct

Unknown to the reader since its first publication in 1867 is that Joseph Smith considered a large portion of the Old Testament as correct. Out of 929 chapters in the Old Testament over 45 percent were listed as correct after making minor revisions in the marked Bible. The 1867 Bible included entire chapters and books as though the text was contained in the original manuscripts. For example, Joseph Smith wrote on OT 2 "Correct" for Nehemiah 11-13, Esther 1-10, Job 36-42 and Psalm 1-10 but crossed out some words within those chapters on his printed Bible.

The 1867 edition reproduced the KJV text with no notation that the manuscript indicated the chapters were correct. In addition, markings in the printed Bible were made in Ecclesiastes as proposed changes, although the name of the book was not recorded on OT 2. Smith considered Ruth, Lamentations, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi correct, but the reader of the 1867 Bible would have no idea that this was the case. Besides chapters listed in the OT 2, other chapter numbers were simply omitted.

For example, Proverbs 23- 31 were not recorded on the manuscript. There is no indication that the omitted chapters should not be included in the revision. Ecclesiastes was not

³¹⁷ OT 1, 10, (November 30, 1830).

³¹⁸ NT 2, folio 4, 105, revision of John 1:1.

listed in OT 2, but the marked Bible contains proposed changes for the revision. This shows the incomplete nature of Old Testament revisions and problems using the 1867 and other printings of the Joseph Smith revision.

Chapters considered correct by Joseph Smith

Genesis: 13 out of 50 chapters
Exodus: 19 out of 40 chapters
Leviticus: 24 out of 27 chapters
Numbers: 34 out of 36 chapters
Deuteronomy: 30 out of 34 chapters
Joshua: 23 out of 24 chapters
Judges: 20 out of 21 chapters
Ruth: "The Book of Ruth is all correct"
1 Samuel: 26 out of 31 chapters
2 Samuel: 22 out of 24 chapters
1 Kings: 16 out of 22 chapters
2 Kings: 23 out of 25 chapters
1 Chronicles: 27 out of 29 chapters
2 Chronicles: 29 out of 36 chapters
Ezra: 10 out of 10 chapters
Nehemiah: 10 out of 13 chapters; Joseph Smith (JS): Nehemiah 11-13 Correct
Esther: 10 out of 10 chapters; JS: Esther 1-10 Correct
Job: 40 out of 42 chapters; JS: Job 3-42 Correct

Note: From Psalm through Malachi 263 chapters were not listed on the manuscript pages.

Psalms: 89 chapters not listed in manuscript of 150 chapters; JS: Psalm 1-10 Correct
Proverbs: 28 chapters not listed in manuscript of 31 chapters
Ecclesiastes: has marking in Bible but not listed in manuscript
Song of Solomon: "The Songs of Solomon are not Inspired writings"
Isaiah: 28 chapters not listed in manuscript of 66 chapters; 1 chapter listed correct
Jeremiah: 33 chapters not listed in manuscript of 52 chapters; 4 chapters listed correct
Lamentations: "The Lamentations of Jeremiah is Correct"
Ezekiel: 28 chapters not listed in manuscript of 48 chapters
Daniel: 11 chapters not listed in manuscript of 12 chapters
Hosea: 13 chapters not listed in manuscript of 14 chapters
Joel: 1 chapter not listed in manuscript of 3 chapters
Amos: 6 chapters not listed in manuscript of 9 chapters
Obadiah: Correct
Jonah: 3 chapters not listed in manuscript of 4 chapters
Micah: Correct
Nahum: Correct
Habakkuk: Correct
Zephaniah: Correct

Haggai: Correct
Zechariah: 11 chapters not listed in manuscript of 14 chapters
Malachi: Correct

The New Testament has more extensive revisions so there are less chapters that were considered correct. The following are numbers of correct chapters:

John: chapters 15, 17-18, 21 are correct
Acts: 9 out of 28 chapters
1 Corinthians: 1 out of 16 chapters
2 Corinthians 3 out of 13 chapters
Galatians: 2 out of 6 chapters
Ephesians: 2 out of 6 chapters
Colossians: 1 out of 4 chapters
1 Thessalonians: 1 out of 5 chapters
2 Thessalonians: 1 out of 3 chapters
Titus: 1 out of 3 chapters
James: 2 out of 5 chapters
2 John: 1 out of 1 correct
3 John: 1 out of 1 correct
Revelation: 4 out of 22 chapters

Revision in the Laws of the Church of Christ

At Kirtland, Ohio, on February 9, 1831, Joseph Smith revealed the Laws of the Church of Christ which included this statement with regard to his revision of the scriptures:

Thou shalt ask & my scriptures shall be given as I have appointed & for thy salvation thou shalt hold thy peace concerning them untill ye have received them & then I give unto you a commandment that ye should teach them unto all men & they also shall be taught unto all Nations[,] Kindreds[,] tongues & People³¹⁹

Three manuscripts have the earlier reading: “for thy salvation thou shalt hold thy peace concerning them.” Later the word “salvation” was crossed out and the word “safety” was added above the line. This change and also the words “it is expedient that” are reflected in the Book of Commandments printing. The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants contained further revision of this revelation.

On March 8, 1831 Joseph Smith dictated to his scribe the beginning of the gospel according to Matthew. The heading of the manuscript read: “A Translation of the New

³¹⁹ “Book of Commandments and Revelations,” 66 in Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper, eds., *Revelations and Translations: Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2009), 102-103. Compare with LDS D&C 42:56-58.

Testament translated by the power of God.”³²⁰ Like the Book of Mormon which was revealed “by the gift and power of God,” the New Testament revision was a revealed text based upon the KJV Bible. Usually when working with the New Testament a person would use a standard text. In the case of revising Matthew 5 Smith used the KJV Bible and what became Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

After returning from a trip to Independence, Missouri, former elder Ezra Booth wrote concerning the understanding of church members:

The Bible is declared too defective to be trusted in its present form; and it is designed that it shall undergo a thorough alteration, or as they say, translation. This work is now in operation. The Gospel by St. Matthew has already received the purifying touch, and is prepared for the use of the church. It was intended to have kept this work a profound secret, and strict commandments were given for that purpose; and even the salvation of the church was said to depend upon it.³²¹

The February 9, 1831, revelation corroborates parts of Booth’s letter concerning the church’s salvation and keeping the revision a secret. Nine months later the minutes of a general conference held on October 25, 1831, at Orange, Ohio, report that Joseph Smith said, “except the church receive the fulness of the Scriptures that they would yet fall.”³²²

A revelation given on January 10, 1832, explained concerning the New Testament that “it is expedient to translate again . . . continue the work of translation until it be finished.”³²³ On February 16, 1832, Joseph Smith and his scribe Sidney Rigdon were working on John chapter 5 when they received what is termed the Vision; actually, a series of visionary experiences relating to the afterlife. This is the Vision of three degrees of glory. It is of interest that John 5:29 was paraphrase in the Book of Mormon.³²⁴

On March 9, 1833, in answer to the question of whether to revise (translate) the Apocrypha, Joseph Smith said the Lord told him “there are many things contained therein that are true, and it is mostly translated correct.” Also, “there are many things contained therein that are not true, which are interpolations by the hands of men.” There was no need to translate the Apocrypha.³²⁵ The text of this revelation indicated, there were “interpolations” (insertions into the text) by men rather than omissions. Joseph Smith did not identify any particular Apocrypha book as having this problem. The end result was that the Apocrypha was not read and revised. If there were additions to the Apocrypha, they were neither removed nor identified but left in the KJV.

³²⁰ NT Manuscript 1, page 1.

³²¹ Ezra Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, October 2, 1831, *The Ohio Star* 2 (October 20, 1831):3, Ravenna, Ohio.

³²² Minutes copied into the “Far West Record.” See Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record: Minutes of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1830-1844* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 23. The phrase “fulness of the Scriptures” refers to Joseph Smith’s Bible revision.

³²³ LDS Doctrine and Covenants 73:3-4.

³²⁴ See LDS Mosiah 16:11, Helaman 12:26 and 3 Nephi 26:5.

³²⁵ LDS Doctrine and Covenants 91:1-3.

In a revelation given on May 6, 1833, it was declared, “it is my will that you should hasten to translate my scriptures.”³²⁶ When reading the Old Testament books, Joseph Smith had his scribe write seven books, viz., Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, and Malachi were “correct” as recorded on OT 2.

Plans to Publish Bible Revision

Further communications were given to church members. On July 2, 1833 Joseph Smith finished his revision of the Bible.³²⁷ Out of 929 chapters in the Old Testament 436 chapters (46.9%) were listed as "correct." Though Genesis had many corrections and additions, thirteen of its chapters were recorded as being correct on OT 2.

In an April 23, 1834 revelation United Firm members were told “for this purpose have I commanded you to organize yourselves, even to print my words, the fulness of my scriptures” and the revelations given to Joseph Smith.³²⁸ By June 1835 further revision of Genesis was made to adjust the ages of some of the Old Testament patriarchs as Smith was preparing to "print the New Translation” of the Bible.³²⁹

When settled at Nauvoo, Illinois, instructions regarding Smith’s Bible revision were given on January 19, 1841, to the newly appointed second counselor in the Church presidency William Law. He was told to support the poor “and publish the new translation of my holy word unto the inhabitants of the earth.”³³⁰

The Council of the Twelve Apostles, a presiding quorum second only in authority to Smith’s First Presidency, issued a notice asking the Church’s local congregations to send their tithes to the Trustee in Trust to support various works, including the “new translation of the bible, and the record of Father Abraham [be] published to the world.”³³¹

After Joseph Smith’s death in June 1844, the marked Joseph Smith Bible and the dictated and revised manuscripts of the New Translation were retained by his widow, Emma Smith, in Nauvoo. The beginning of an index for the revision of Genesis was kept among church records taken to Salt Lake City by historian Willard Richards.

“or in other words”

In making corrections and additions, Joseph Smith sometimes explains the text with the phrase “or in other words.” Philip Barlow, at the time, Associate Professor of Theological Studies at Hanover College, explains:

³²⁶ LDS Doctrine and Covenants 93:53.

³²⁷ OT 2, 119, recorded “Finished on the 2d day of July 1833.”

³²⁸ LDS Doctrine and Covenants 104:58.

³²⁹ Joseph Smith to "Dear brethren in the Lord," June 15, 1835, Church History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.

³³⁰ LDS Doctrine and Covenants 124:89.

³³¹ “Temple Friends,” *Times and Seasons* 3 (March 1, 1842):715, Nauvoo, Illinois. The new translation (revision) of the Bible was not published in Joseph Smith’s lifetime.

A third category is “interpretive additions,” often signaled by the phrase “or in other words,” which the Prophet [Joseph Smith] appended to a passage he wished to clarify. Thus, to Jesus’ counsel to turn one’s other cheek if smitten (Luke 6:29), Smith added “or, in other words, it is better to offer the other [cheek], than to revile again.” The interpretative phrase “or in other words” (often shortened to “in other words” or simply “or”) is common in Smith’s sermons as well as in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, and the revisions of the Bible.³³²

Examples of such interpreted phrases are included in Joseph Smith’s revision of the gospels. What follows was used by Joseph to interpret or clarify a particular passage:

or whose place I am not able to fill (Matt. 3:11; John 1:27)
or the destruction of the wicked (Matt. 13:39, 40; 24:3, 14; Mark 13:4, 10)
or the messenger sent of heaven (Matt. 13:39)
or in other words John the Baptist and Moses (Mark 9:4)
or in other words it is better to offer the other [cheek] than to revile again (Luke 6:29)
or in other words is afraid to lay down their life for my sake (Luke 14:26)
or in other words whithersoever the saints are gathered (Luke 17:37)
or thither will the remainder be gathered together (Luke 17:37)
or in other words the Gentiles (Luke 23:31)

More than anything else, the above listing shows Smith’s involvement with the KJV revision process. One of the purposes in making the Bible revision was for Joseph Smith to clarify difficult English passages and make the gospel texts clearer for church members. This type of revision was similar to the revelations that he gave for church instruction.

Examples from the New Testament

When Mark 13 was revised, verses 9, 11-12, 33-36 were omitted. The reason for these important omissions is because Smith substituted his previous revision of Matthew 24 for Mark’s text. Joseph Smith either presumed that Matthew preempted the writing of Mark or just wanted to use his prior revision of Matthew for the new text of Mark. This view is confirmed in the publication of the JST manuscripts:

In the Bible, Matthew’s account of Jesus’ great discourse to the Twelve on the Mount of Olives (Matthew 24) is much longer and more detailed than Mark’s (Mark 13). Both were changed significantly in the Joseph Smith Translation.

A comparison of the Matthew and Mark accounts in the New Translation shows that when Joseph Smith and his scribe arrived at Mark 13, the Prophet

³³² Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 51-52.

decided to copy the corrected Matthew account from NT2.1 rather than to revise the existing verses in Mark.³³³

Besides short phrases or sentence additions to the gospels, large blocks of text of more than fifty words each also appear in various places. These long texts appear to represent material that Joseph Smith believed were in the gospels anciently. For example, he added the following text to Luke 3:13:

For it is well known unto you, Theophelus,³³⁴ that after the manner of the Jews, and according to the custom of their law, in receiving money in the treasury, that out of the abundance [abundance] which was received was appointed unto the poor, every man his portion; and after this manner did the publicans also, wherefore John said unto them, exact no more than that which is appointed you.³³⁵

This wording gives the impression that Joseph Smith is supplying a missing part to Luke. The wording shows that Smith is trying to present a better text rather than a commentary in this addition to Luke. The additional wording, though represented to be in the text, is not in Codex Vaticanus, Codex Sinaiticus, or papyrus fragment P4 (ca. 200), nor in any other Greek manuscript. A longer insertion in Luke 3:4 is also an addition not paralleled by Greek manuscripts.³³⁶ The passage of John 7:53-8:11 about the woman taken in adultery was retained by Joseph Smith. Early Greek manuscripts do not include these verses.

A good example of harmonization appears from the reading in John 20:12, “And seeth two angels in white.” The gospel accounts of an angel, a man, two men, or two angels at the tomb was revised in an interesting way. The KJV text of John 20:12 provided an influence for the revisions of Matt. 28:2; Mark 16:5; Luke 24:2; and John 20:1.

KJV:

the angel (Matt. 28:2)
a young man (Mark 16:5)
two men (Luke 24:4)
John 20:1
two angels (John 20:12)

Revision:

two angels
two angels
moved to revision of Luke 24:2 - two angels
two angels (addition)
two angels (remained the same)

³³³ Scott H. Faulring, Kent P. Jackson, and Robert J. Matthews, eds., *Joseph Smith's New Translation of the Bible: Original Manuscripts* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2004), 303-304.

³³⁴ The name was spelled "Theophilus" in Luke 1:3 (KJV).

³³⁵ NT 2, f. 3, 52. Robert J. Matthews wrote concerning this addition: “By inference, at least, the reader is led to believe that he is expected to regard this information as a restoration of what Luke had originally written.” *A Plainer Translation: Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible: A History and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), 239.

³³⁶ See Matthew 3:3 and Mark 1:2.

It is of interest that some revisions, from "James the less" to "James the younger" (revision of Mark 15:40), are the same as edited in Alexander Campbell's *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ* published in 1826.³³⁷ Campbell's New Testament also titled his gospels "The Testimony of . . ." This shows that others made similar changes in wording as Joseph Smith.

The following listing includes the major additions of words to the synoptic gospels that have fifty words or more:

<u>Over 50 words</u>	<u>Over 100 words</u>	<u>Over 200 words</u>
Matt. 2:23	Matt. 7:8	Mark 13:37
Matt. 3:7	Matt. 21:46	
Matt. 5:2	Mark 13:7	
Matt. 6:24	Mark 13:32	
Matt. 7:4	Luke 3:4	
Matt. 9:15	Luke 12:38	
Matt. 27:37	Luke 16:17	
Matt. 27:44	Luke 17:37	
Mark 8:38		
Mark 9:45		
Luke 3:13		
Luke 12:9		
Luke 14:33		

Summary

The results of the foregoing comparisons in the New Testament support the position that the textual variants added by Joseph Smith were independent of the Greek text. There is no manuscript evidence to support the additional words in the new translation of the gospels. This confirms the position that the word "translation" is not the proper term to designate what occurred during the dictation of the text by Smith based upon his textual changes.

In his project Joseph Smith made large additions to the KJV texts in Genesis and the gospels. He rearranged English words in verses, at times omitting italic words, and changing old spellings. Smith's inclusion of words from the Book of Mormon in Genesis, Isaiah and Matthew indicates that he wanted a Bible for church members.

At the present time no Restoration church publishes the complete English text that Joseph Smith worked on over one hundred and eighty years ago. While Smith considered his Bible revision as an important part of his restored church the project went nowhere. The Bible project is not seriously regarded by biblical scholars.

³³⁷ Other readings like Smith's use of "imposture" in Matt. 27:64 and "empire" in Luke 2:1 use the same words as those employed in Campbell's 1826 publication.

The Book of Abraham

Response to Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham

In Remembrance of Robert K. Ritner
(May 5, 1953-July 25, 2021)

The Essay

The essay on “Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham” starts by stating that the LDS Church embraces the book as scripture.³³⁸ It proclaims that it is a record of the biblical patriarch Abraham and as such tells that he wanted the priesthood and “received knowledge about the Creation.” The book adds to what is known about the life and teachings of Abraham.

The second paragraph states that the book of Abraham was published in 1842 and included in the Pearl of Great Price that was canonized by an LDS Church conference in 1880. It is stated that the book originated with Egyptian papyri and that it is impossible to reconstruct how it was done as only small fragments now exist. It is conjecture about the relationship of the book’s text and those fragments.

Having stated the above, the essay says that the book of Abraham “is consistent with historical knowledge about the ancient world.” But even this cannot prove the book is true. As scripture “the book of Abraham supports, expands, and clarifies the biblical account of Abraham’s life.” Three paragraphs briefly summarize the content of the book.

Another section tells about the origin of the book, purchased in 1835, with one of the papyri rolls being the writings of Abraham. Though Joseph Smith did not know ancient languages he worked on an Egyptian grammar soon after purchasing the papyri. Next is a lengthy part concerning the papyri that came back into the possession of the LDS Church in 1967.

The essay mentions that “None of the characters on the papyrus fragments mention Abraham’s name or any of the events recorded in the book of Abraham.” The papyrus fragments date “long after Abraham lived.” The records could be copies, redacted later and the illustrations also could have no connection with Abraham. The process of obtaining the text could be by revelation.

The book of Abraham fits into the ancient world view and helps the claim of its historicity as an ancient record. The book is against human sacrifice and rejects the worship of idols. Explanations of the Abraham facsimiles by Joseph Smith have “earmarks of the ancient world.” Abraham taught astronomy to Egyptians. Some ancient traditions were known in Joseph Smith’s time and some were not.

The essay concludes by explaining that scholarly debate cannot settle the veracity and value or its status as scripture. Only through “study, prayer, and spiritual confirmation” can its truth be found.

³³⁸ “Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham,” posted on www.lds.org, (under Gospel Topics), July 8, 2014.

Response

As the essay indicates, the book of Abraham is considered scripture and can be accepted as such by “study, prayer, and spiritual confirmation.” It is also possible to understand by using historical methods to develop what the ancient text says. In this response I will explain some of the history and development of what is accepted as the writings of Abraham and how it relates to the interest in America of artifacts from Egypt. The essay is important in what it says concerning the name Abraham and whether the story recounted in the book is connected with one of the Egyptian papyri.

Acquiring the Egyptian Papyri

In July 1835, one hundred eighty years ago, members of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, purchased four Egyptian mummies and some papyri. Soon after church prophet-president Joseph Smith Jr. (1805-44) worked on an “Egyptian Alphabet” that is connected with the first illustration of the ancient papyrus. The papyrus was damaged and in order to preserve the beginning of the Egyptian papyrus it was attached to paper. The first illustration was “restored” and published in the church newspaper *Times and Seasons* in March 1842. It was called “A FAC-SIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM. N0. 1” though it is not an exact reproduction of the original.

The claim was that this record was the “Book of Abraham” and that it was written by him on papyrus in ancient times, “while he was in Egypt.” If this writing was produced by Abraham, father of the Hebrew nation, it would be the oldest known document relating to the Hebrew Scriptures. Whether the “Book of Abraham” is an ancient record is a logical question. Though the printed book in the English language is no more than fifteen pages, it is important to consider whether it is a recent production or an ancient one.

The individual who sold the papyri and Egyptian mummies to the LDS Church was Michael H. Chandler (circa 1797-1866). He was impressed with church president Joseph Smith. With the artifacts there was a printed placard that explained the mummies “may have lived in the days of Jacob, Moses, or David” and the papyri with their ancient writing “will be exhibited with the Mummies.”³³⁹ Smith believed that one of the papyrus rolls contained the writings of Abraham and the other the writings of Joseph. He showed Michael Chandler some characters on the papyrus that he said were similar to the characters found on the Book of Mormon gold plates.³⁴⁰ For these reasons, Smith decided to purchase the relics. Chandler presented the following certificate to Smith before the purchase was made:

Kirtland, July 6th, 1835.

This is to make known to all who may be desirous, concerning the knowledge of Mr. Joseph Smith, jr. in deciphering the ancient Egyptian hieroglyphic characters, in my possession, which I have, in many eminent cities, shown to the most learned: And, from the information that I could learn, or meet with, I find that [i.e., the translation] of Mr. Joseph Smith, jr. to correspond in the most minute matters.

³³⁹ “Egyptian Antiquities,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 13 (May 2, 1842):774, Nauvoo, Illinois.

³⁴⁰ Oliver Cowdery, Letter to William Frye, December 22, 1835, Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 72, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California; published in *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 2, no. 3 (December 1835):235, Kirtland, Ohio.

(Signed) Michael H. Chandler.
Travelling with, and proprietor of Egyptian Mummies.³⁴¹

Chandler's asking price for the items was \$2,400, a substantial amount considering the expenditures Smith's church was incurring in constructing the large meetinghouse to be known as the Kirtland House of the Lord, or Kirtland Temple. According to Joseph Coe (1784-1854), arrangements were made to make the purchase before Chandler left Kirtland. Coe explained eight years later, in 1844, that Chandler was merely the agent for the real owners of the relics: "Previous t[o] closing the contra[c]t with Chandler I made ar[r]angements with S[imeon]. Andrews for to take one third part and your self [Joseph Smith] & Co. one third leaving one third to be borne by myself.... Chandler was only an agent acting for some men in Philadelphia."³⁴²

Contents of the Book of Abraham

The Pearl of Great Price (2013 edition) has five separate items in its contents and is the only LDS scripture with illustrations. The Book of Abraham is divided into five chapters containing 136 verses. The most interesting aspect of the book is that it includes three illustrations. The first illustration is mentioned twice in the opening chapter of the book.

The papyrus that was used to render the text of what was considered Abraham's record has a relationship to the three printed illustrations. The book is unique in that the illustrations are considered part of Joseph Smith's book of Abraham. The Egyptian papyrus was in the same language family reported to have been written on the plates of the Book of Mormon. Joseph Smith soon obtained by divine revelation the information that the Egyptian writing contained the teachings of Abraham and also a sacred record of Joseph. This was the reason he desired to pay \$2,400 for the papyri and mummies.

William W. Phelps (1792-1872), Warren Parrish (1803-77), and John Whitmer (1802-78), scribes and church historian, each mention that Smith when he saw the Egyptian records knew by revelation he could "translate" the Egyptian characters. God ordered that the ancient artifacts that Chandler exhibited should come into the possession of the church. Joseph Smith indicated that he could decipher the hidden language of the ancient Egyptians. To Smith the rolls of papyri were ancient records and would be of great value to the saints.³⁴³

The story in the first two chapters consists of Abraham's desire to be ordained and become a high priest, the attempted sacrifice of Abraham on an altar, the patriarchal priesthood,

³⁴¹ Ibid.

³⁴² Coe, Letter to Joseph Smith, January 1, 1844, Joseph Smith Collection, Church History Library, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah; hereafter LDS Church History Library. It is not known how the one-third share was finally disposed of as the Smith family retained the mummies and papyri. Joseph Smith replied to Coe, "I have got your Deed...for all the interest you ever held in the Mummies" (Smith, Copy of letter to Coe, January 18, 1844, LDS Church History Library; see Dean C. Jessee, comp. and ed., *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, Rev. Ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co./Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 593.

³⁴³ H. Michael Marquardt, *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844*, 2nd ed. (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2013), 237-48.

and the first person account of his travels. The final three chapters explain information on a pre-earth life and the order of creation.

Joseph Smith believed that the damaged papyrus was the writing of Abraham. The first and third illustrations came from the same papyrus roll. The first one is extant while the third is lost. The second round illustration, like the third, is lost but characters from the original papyrus were included as they filled in the places missing from the lost original.

There were two time periods when the text was dictated to scribes. They are (1) Abraham 1:1 to 2:18 at Kirtland, Ohio in 1835 and (2) explanations of the illustrations and Abraham 2:19 to 5:21 at Nauvoo, Illinois in 1842.

The first thing to consider is whether the papyrus is somehow connected with the writing of Abraham. The printed text reports that Abraham tells his audience: “and that you might have knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record.”³⁴⁴ The representation is to the first illustration at the front of the book. So it is known that the writing is connected with the papyrus. The English text is clear on this point. The record also states:

And I, Abraham, journeyed, going on still towards the South; and there was a continuation of a famine in the Land, and I Abraham concluded to go down into Egypt, to sojourn there, for the famine became very grievous.”³⁴⁵

What is of interest is that this short excerpt from the story is similar to the book of Genesis. The earlier name Abram is included before his name was changed to Abraham. For comparison purposes the King James Version of Genesis is used and similar words are highlighted in **bold**:

And Abram journeyed, going on still toward the south. And there was a famine in the land; and Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there; for the famine was grievous in the land.³⁴⁶

Except for six words the text is the same. By close comparison what is found is that this part of the story, represented to have been written by Abraham, is already found in the book of Genesis coming from the first book of the Hebrew Scriptures. The essay mentions the historicity of the record and indeed the texts of Genesis 11:28-29 and Genesis 12:1-13 were used, some with revisions, in the composition of the “Book of Abraham.” About 48% (66 verses) of the story follow the Genesis account.

An emphasis on priesthood authority was an important topic in the LDS Church in 1835. Joseph Smith Sr. (1771-1840) was apparently appointed as the Church's first ordained patriarch in December 1834. As a patriarch he would pronounce blessings on church members, assigning to them a lineage mainly of one of the sons of Jacob in the book of Genesis. He usually predicted prophetic insight for the individual to follow and what heavenly blessings they could obtain if

³⁴⁴ “The Book of Abraham,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (March 1, 1842):704; see Abraham 1:12, also verse 14.

³⁴⁵ *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842):719; see Abraham 2:21.

³⁴⁶ Genesis 12:9-10, King James Version.

faithful. The prophet Joseph Smith Jr. wanted to trace the Church's new office of patriarch back to biblical times. He taught in April 1835 that the patriarchal priesthood "was confirmed to be handed down from father to son, and rightly belongs to the literal descendants of the chosen seed, to whom the promises were made."³⁴⁷ A listing, including the line of this heavenly authority from Adam to Noah, was reportedly "written in the book of Enoch."³⁴⁸

In addition, since 1830, the younger Smith had been working on a new "translation" of the King James Version of the Bible. By June 1835, he had edited his revision of Genesis to adjust the ages of some of the Old Testament patriarchs who lived before Noah, and was preparing to "print the New Translation [of the Bible]."³⁴⁹ In fact, on June 21, shortly before Chandler's arrival, Smith publicly "preached in Kirtland on the evangelical [i.e., patriarchal] order."³⁵⁰ Given Smith's interest in priesthood, patriarchs, and the translation of ancient texts, the arrival in Kirtland of Chandler's traveling exhibit of ancient Egyptian artifacts was fortuitous.

An "Egyptian Alphabet"

Shortly after acquiring Chandler's mummies and ancient Egyptian writings, Smith embarked upon preparing an alphabet of the Egyptian characters to help him "translate" what he believed was the Abraham papyrus. The so-called manuscript "Egyptian Alphabet" (which also represents a type of grammar) was used by Joseph Smith's scribes to record his translation and interpretation of Egyptian characters and other symbols. Only thirty-four pages of Smith's "Egyptian Alphabet" Ms. 1 have writing on them. The majority of the handwritten pages were recorded in July 1835. The original manuscript book is preserved today in the LDS Church History Library. It may be printed by the Church Historian's Press as part of the Joseph Smith Papers Project.³⁵¹

Smith worked closely with Oliver Cowdery (1806-50) and William W. Phelps on this Alphabet. Smith regularly used scribes to help him write important records. These include the Book of Mormon; his revelations; his revision of the Bible; the "Book of Abraham;" many of his letters; and his personal journal. The "Manuscript History of the Church," also known as the "History of Joseph Smith" or *History of the Church*, contains the following two entries for the month of July 1835:

³⁴⁷ H. Michael Marquardt, *Joseph Smith's 1828-1843 Revelations* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2013), 228; LDS D&C 107:40.

³⁴⁸ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith's 1828-1843 Revelations*, 228-29; LDS D&C 107:39-57. Joseph Smith was said to recover, while revising Genesis, the lost prophetic book of Enoch mentioned in Jude 1:14. He now provided the line of patriarchal authority.

³⁴⁹ Smith, Letter to "Dear brethren in the Lord," June 15, 1835, LDS Church History Library. See Jesse, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 363.

³⁵⁰ Manuscript History, Book B-1:595, LDS Church History Library; Joseph Smith Jr. et al., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Period 1*, Brigham H. Roberts, ed., revised and enlarged, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 2:234, hereafter *History of the Church*.

³⁵¹ The 34 inscribed pages are numbered 1–34. There are 188 blank pages interspersed among the inscribed pages. Blocks of text start on pages 1, 8, 12, 15, 19, 23, 27, 29, 31, and 33. "Grammar and Alphabet of the Egyptian Language," located at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/paperSummary/grammar-and-alphabet-of-the-egyptian-language-circa-july-circa-december-1835>

I [Joseph Smith], with W. W. Phelps and O. Cowdery, as scribes, commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics.³⁵²

The remainder of this month, I [Joseph Smith] was continually engaged in translating an alphabet to the Book of Abraham, and arranging a grammar of the Egyptian language as practiced by the ancients.³⁵³

The surviving manuscripts of this Alphabet contain Egyptian characters copied by Smith, Cowdery, Phelps, and later in November 1835 by a third scribe, Warren Parrish. Some of the characters were copied directly from the original papyrus—from the vignette (or illustration) of what Smith published in 1842 as Facsimile No. 1 of his "Book of Abraham" translation. Smith, Phelps, and Cowdery first worked together on manuscripts 3 to 5. Phelps then recorded Smith's interpretations for each degree on manuscript 1. Later, Parrish briefly wrote in the manuscript 1 for Smith. While Smith's Alphabet does not provide accurate English translations of the Egyptian characters, it does offer insight into the way Smith approached the papyri prior to dictating the "Book of Abraham" text.³⁵⁴

The "Book of Abraham" contains ideas and wording that clearly depend upon material found in "Egyptian Alphabet" Ms. 1. This is especially evident where there is new information regarding Abraham. Included in the Alphabet are some Egyptian-like characters nowhere found on the papyri. The English explanations in the "Book of Abraham" are found in its fullest context in the Alphabet's 5th Degree. For example, in Abraham chapter 1, the name "Abraham" comes from a character in the Alphabet having the sound "Ah broam" or "Ah brah-oam."

The essay tells about the place the "Book of Abraham" has in Latter-day Saint thought. An example is the pre-earth life before being physically born and the creation of the earth from preexisting matter.

Teaching on Creation Gods

In Nauvoo, Illinois, on May 4-5, 1842, Smith introduced the temple endowment ceremony to the founding members of his Quorum of the Anointed.³⁵⁵ Smith's new ceremony included an account of the council of the creation gods. The next month, June 1842, Smith told Rev. George

³⁵² Manuscript History, Book B-1:596; *History of the Church*, 2:236. In January 1843, Smith "gave some instructions about Phelps & [Willard] Richards uniting in writing the history of the church" (Joseph Smith, Journal, January 20, 1843, LDS Church History Library). These scribes wrote in Smith's name and with his authorization. The information was based upon Phelps's recollection as he was in Kirtland at the time working with Smith. The two entries for July 1835 were written in September 1843.

³⁵³ Manuscript History, Book B-1:597; *History of the Church*, 2:238.

³⁵⁴ I retain the numbering of the manuscripts as found in Hugh Nibley, "The Meaning of the Kirtland Egyptian Papers," *BYU Studies* 11 (Summer 1971):351. The original manuscripts are in LDS Church History Library. For a fuller treatment to the Joseph Smith papyri see H. Michael Marquardt. "Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papers: A History," in Robert K. Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2011), 11-56; paperback edition (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2013), 11-68.

³⁵⁵ *History of the Church* 5:1-3.

Moore: "We believe in three Gods, equal in power and glory. There are three persons in heaven, but those three are not one."³⁵⁶ When the LDS endowment was later fully administered in the Nauvoo Temple, the names of the three gods involved in the planning and organization of the Earth were identified as Eloheem [Elohim], Jehovah, and Michael.³⁵⁷

When revising the Bible in June 1830, Smith had reported that God (singular) was the Creator.³⁵⁸ While the teaching of one god is found in the Book of Mormon (1829-30), by the time Smith worked on the last chapters of the "Book of Abraham" twelve years later in early March 1842, he had come to accept polytheism.³⁵⁹ There are forty-eight references to the plurality of gods in Abraham chapters 4-5. (Again, bold type signals Smith's additions to the Genesis account.)

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

In the "Book of Abraham" the idea of plural gods (polytheism), a belief in many creation gods, has been added to the creation account.

And then the Lord said: Let us go down. And they went down at the beginning, and they, that is the Gods, organized and formed the heavens and the earth. (Abraham 4:1)

The beginning part of the LDS endowment outlines a belief in three creation gods. Those present are told about the commands and reports of the creation of the earth.

"Book of Abraham" Papyrus fragments after 1844

After Smith's death on June 27, 1844, his younger brother William (1811-93) and mother, Lucy (1775-1856), continued periodically to display the Egyptian records and mummies to visitors. In August 1851, newly appointed Church Apostle Franklin D. Richards (1821-99) published a small pamphlet in England entitled *The Pearl of Great Price*, which featured the text of Smith's "Book of Abraham" and the three facsimiles, which had been re-engraved. Some five years later, Théodule Devéria (1831-72), a young artist, photographer, and student of Egyptology working in the Louvre Museum (Paris, France), examined the "Book of Abraham" facsimiles. In commenting on Facsimile No. 3, Fig. 5, he wrote: "The deceased led by Ma into the presence of Osiris. His name is Horus, as may be seen in the prayer which is at the bottom of the picture, and which is addressed to the divinities of the four cardinal points."³⁶⁰ Devéria was thus the first to observe that what Joseph

³⁵⁶ George Moore, Journal, entry for June 3, 1842, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, Massachusetts. See also "A Visit to Joe Smith," *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 22 (September 15, 1842):926.

³⁵⁷ See Devery S. Anderson and Gary James Bergera, eds., *The Nauvoo Endowment Companies, 1845-1846: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2005), 5, 21, 23n20.

³⁵⁸ Old Testament Manuscript 1, 3, Community of Christ Library-Archives, Independence, Missouri; see Moses 2:1.

³⁵⁹ For essays on the LDS concept of God, see Gary James Bergera, ed., *Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990).

³⁶⁰ First published in French in Jules Remy, *Voyage au Pays des Mormons*, 2 vols. (Paris: E. Dentu, 1860), and in English translation in Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley, *A Journey to Great Salt Lake City* (London: W. Jeffs, 1861), 2:546.

Smith had published as a "Facsimile from the Book of Abraham" was actually an ancient funeral illustration for a deceased Egyptian man named Horus (Hôr).

Less than two weeks after Lucy Smith's death in May 1856, her son Joseph's Egyptian papyri and mummies were purchased by a man named Abel Combs (1823-92). The bill of sale gave a brief history of the artifacts including: "From translations by Mr. [Joseph] Smith of the records, these [four] mummies were found to be in the family of Pharo [Pharaoh], king of Egypt." The bill was signed by Lewis C. Bidamon (1806-91), his wife and Joseph Smith's widow Emma Hale Smith Bidamon (1804-79), and her eldest son Joseph Smith III (1832-1914).³⁶¹

Combs subsequently sold two of Smith's mummies and some of the papyri to Edward Wyman's St. Louis Museum (in Missouri) and kept the others. When the museum placed some of the items on display in 1856, Gustaf Seyffarth, a visiting professor at the Concordia Seminary in St. Louis County, who had studied Egyptian, also read the name of the person for whom Facsimile No. 3 had been made: "the papyrus roll is not a record, but an invocation to the Deity Osirus, in which occurs the name of the person, (Horus,) and a picture of the attendant spirits, introducing the dead to the Judge, Osiris."³⁶²

The mummies and papyri were eventually resold to Joseph H. Wood, owner of the popular Col. Wood's Museum in Chicago (the museum changed its name a number of times). They were on exhibit and were probably destroyed in the Chicago Fire in October 1871.³⁶³ This is the last known location of the two mummies and artifacts. Also after Lewis Bidamon's death in 1891, his son Charles Edwin Bidamon retained in his possession ten pages of "Book of Abraham" Translation Manuscript 1. This manuscript, together with other historical items, was later sold by Bidamon to LDS collector Wilford C. Wood in July 1937. Wood afterwards donated the pages to the LDS Church.³⁶⁴

In 1873, Thomas B. H. Stenhouse (1825-82), a dissident Mormon, published his book *The Rocky Mountain Saints: A Full and Complete History of the Mormons*, which reprinted Devéria's comments on the "Book of Abraham" facsimiles. Stenhouse's book was republished at least four times by 1905.³⁶⁵ These republications circulated more widely Devéria's observation that some of the "Book of Abraham" material was funerary in nature and that Facsimile No. 3, in particular, had originally been made for an Egyptian named Horus.

The second edition of the *Pearl of Great Price*, as edited by LDS Apostle Orson Pratt (1811-81), was issued in 1878. It was here that the words "purporting to be" were removed from the heading description of the "Book of Abraham," thereby cementing the assertion that Abraham himself wrote the "Book of Abraham." George Reynolds (1842-1909), another LDS Church

³⁶¹ The bill of sale is dated May 26, 1856, LDS Church History Library. The bill was printed in "The Mormon Prophet's Mummies," *Daily Missouri Democrat*, June 12, 1857, St. Louis, Missouri.

³⁶² As cited in *Catalogue of the St. Louis Museum* (1859), 45, in Jay M. Todd, *The Saga of the Book of Abraham* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1969), 298. See also Stanley B. Kimball, "New Light on Old Egyptiana: Mormon Mummies, 1848-71," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 16 (Winter 1983):73-74.

³⁶³ See Kimball, *Ibid.*, 77-82.

³⁶⁴ Todd, *Saga of the Book of Abraham*, 326-31.

³⁶⁵ T. B. H. Stenhouse, *The Rocky Mountain Saints: A Full and Complete History of the Mormons* (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1873), 513-19. Republished in 1874 (London), 1878 (London), 1900 (New York), and 1904 (Salt Lake City).

official, the next year published a defense of the "Book of Abraham" as a divine and ancient record.³⁶⁶ Then, on October 10, 1880, the *Pearl of Great Price*, including the text of the "Book of Abraham," was publicly canonized by LDS Church members as official scripture together with the Holy Bible, Book of Mormon, and Doctrine and Covenants.³⁶⁷ Later, in a new edition, the *Pearl of Great Price* was again publicly voted upon as official scripture on October 6, 1902.³⁶⁸ Until 1981, the LDS Church printed the text of the 1902 edition of the "Book of Abraham," which relied on re-engraved copies of the facsimiles first published by Franklin Richards in 1851. Beginning in 1981, the Church returned to printing all three facsimiles as originally engraved by Reuben Hedlock (1809-69) in 1842.

In 1912, Rev. Franklin S. Spalding (1865-1914), Episcopalian Bishop to Utah, released his own independent study of the "Book of Abraham." Spalding's work printed letters from eight prominent Egyptologists, Orientalists, linguists, and historians who had responded to his inquiry regarding Joseph Smith's interpretations of the three facsimiles.³⁶⁹ (The published facsimiles provided at the time the only means for evaluating the accuracy of Smith's "translations.") All eight scholars independently reported that the facsimiles were ancient Egyptian funerary illustrations and bore no relationship to the English text of Smith's "translation."

In the intervening years, a few rebuttal articles appeared in LDS Church periodicals dealing with Spalding's book, and attempting to establish an ancient origin for the "Book of Abraham." Except for a handful of articles or books mentioning the controversy, nothing of importance occurred again until the 1960s.

As it turned out, Abel Combs retained in his possession the bill of sale and some of the papyri he had purchased from Lucy Smith's estate in 1856. After his death in 1892, these items passed to his nurse Charlotte Benecke Weaver. The papyri and bill of sale eventually ended up in the possession of Weaver's daughter Alice Combs Weaver Heusser, who approached the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City about selling them in 1918. At the time, the museum was not interested in acquiring the materials. Almost three decades later, however, the museum revisited its decision and purchased the papyri artifacts in 1947 from Edward Heusser,

³⁶⁶ See George Reynolds, *The Book of Abraham. Its Authenticity Established as a Divine and Ancient Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News and Publishing Establishment, 1879). This forty-nine-page booklet had previously appeared serially in the *Deseret Evening News*, Salt Lake City, December 1878-March 1879.

³⁶⁷ See *Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 42 (November 15, 1880):724. Six years later, Devéria's examination was republished in W. Wyl [pseud. Wilhelm Ritter von Wymetal], *Mormon Portraits or the Truth about Mormon Leaders from 1830 to 1886* (Salt Lake City: Tribune Printing and Publishing Co., 1886), 221-23.

³⁶⁸ This edition was prepared by James E. Talmage (1862-1933) and contains chapters and verses to the text of the "Book of Abraham."

³⁶⁹ Franklin S. Spalding, *Joseph Smith, Jr., As a Translator* (Salt Lake City: Arrow Press, 1912); Roger R. Keller, "Episcopalian Bishop Franklin S. Spalding and the Mormons," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 69 (Summer 2001):244-45. While Spalding was aware of *The Rocky Mountain Saints and Journey to Great Salt Lake City*, he solicited his own independent evaluations.

Alice's widower.³⁷⁰ The fate of the two remaining Chandler mummies is unknown, though Combs probably sold them to another museum or private individual.³⁷¹

By the mid-1960s, the Metropolitan Museum of Art had decided to raise funds by selling some of its less unique holdings. Coincidentally, Aziz S. Atiya, a Coptic studies scholar at the University of Utah in Salt Lake City, was shown the papyri while researching some of the museum's collections in 1966.³⁷² Though not a member of the LDS Church, Atiya knew of the papyri's importance to Mormons and soon was in touch with N. Eldon Tanner of the Church's First Presidency. Negotiations with the museum began a few weeks later. Eventually, an anonymous patron agreed to make a donation to the museum to cover the cost of the transfer, thereby facilitating the museum's "gift" of the items to the LDS Church on November 27, 1967.³⁷³

The museum's transfer included eleven pieces, or fragments, of papyri, once belonging to three separate papyri—including the original of Facsimile No. 1. These fragments have since been, numbered as JSP (Joseph Smith Papyri) I-VIII, X-XI.³⁷⁴ These eleven fragments joined a twelfth fragment of pieced-together papyri long-held by the LDS Church and known as the "Church Historian's Fragment" (now JSP IX, originally part of Ta-sherit-Min's "Book of the Dead"). The LDS Church subsequently published photographs of all of these the papyri in the February 1968 issue of its official *Improvement Era* magazine.

The papyrus characters included in the three English translation manuscripts and used to fill in missing areas in Facsimile No. 2 come from Joseph Smith Papyri (JSP) XI. This papyrus roll included the original (JSP I) of Facsimile No. 1 and ended with what is now Facsimile No. 3. It is known as the "Book of Breathings Made by Isis" and Papyrus of Hôr (also Horus, Horos). It is the oldest dated Book of Breathings composed circa 150 B.C.E.³⁷⁵ Prior the time of Christ this Egyptian priest died. He had the common name of Horus. The papyrus scroll prepared for him concerns itself with the afterlife of the Egyptian priest Hôr, who was the son of his father Osorwer (also Osoroeris), who also was a priest and was deceased.

Joseph Smith used the first and last illustration from the Papyrus of Hôr to provide a visual image relating to the story of Abraham. A number of Egyptian characters from this same papyrus were used together with "restored" characters to fill in pieces of the papyrus that had broken off and were missing from the first lines. Smith was intrigued by the topic that Abraham taught astronomy

³⁷⁰ H. Donl Peterson, *The Story of the Book of Abraham: Mummies, Manuscripts, and Mormonism* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1995), 242-47.

³⁷¹ Stanley Kimball concluded in 1983: "If they indeed exist, they are probably in storage, unknown, unidentified, and forgotten. Would the papyri be with them? Probably not" (Kimball, "New Light on Old Egyptiana: Mormon Mummies," 90).

³⁷² Also in April 1966, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, critics of the LDS Church, published a photographic reproduction (based on a microfilm copy) and a transcription of Joseph Smith's various Egyptian alphabet manuscripts: *Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet and Grammar* (Salt Lake City: Modern Microfilm Co., 1966).

³⁷³ "An Interview with Dr. [Henry G.] Fischer," conducted by Norman Tolk, Lynn Travers, George D. Smith Jr., and F. Charles Graves, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 2 (Winter 1967):64.

³⁷⁴ Hugh W. Nibley numbered the papyri in *Improvement Era* 71 (February 1968):40, 40-A to 40-I.

³⁷⁵ For the dating of JSP I, X, and XI, see Marc Coenen, "The Ownership and Dating of Certain Joseph Smith Papyri," in Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition* (2011 edition), 57-71; (2013 edition), 69-87.

to the Egyptians that he gave instructions to have the damaged round disk (hypocephalus) filled in with characters from the Hôr papyrus.

As Egyptian studies progressed it became clearer that Joseph Smith had an important collection of papyri. Scholarly translations by Egyptologists John A. Wilson and Klaus Baer of some of the papyri followed in the independent LDS periodical *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* in its summer and autumn 1968 issues.³⁷⁶ Their translations again confirmed the status of the papyri as Egyptian funerary materials. Later translations by LDS and non-LDS scholars indicate that all of the recovered papyri are Egyptian funerary writings.

The latest book in this regard is the work of Robert K. Ritner, Professor of Egyptology in the Oriental Institute, at the University of Chicago. He cites the studies of non-LDS Egyptologists John A. Wilson, Richard A. Parker, and Klaus Baer, together with the works of LDS scholars who worked on deciphering the papyri under discussion which includes Hugh W. Nibley, Michael D. Rhodes and John Gee. Ritner provides a critical work on the following Egyptian texts: the Breathing Permit of Hôr, Book of the Dead of Ta-sherit-Min, Book of the Dead (chapter 125) of Nefer-ir-nebu, Book of Amenhotep and the Hypocephalus of Sheshonq.³⁷⁷

The conclusion of all scholarly studies of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers—beginning in 1859-60 and continuing to the present—is that Smith, like other Americans of his time, had no knowledge or understanding of ancient Egyptian language(s). Before the Egyptian papyri were relocated to the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Latter-day Saints believed that Smith could accurately translate Egyptian and that it was written by Abraham.

Since 1967, most analyses of the "Book of Abraham" by LDS Church members, including the recent essay, no longer argue for the work as a literal translation of an ancient text. The papyrus that contains the Egyptian characters appearing on the three Translation Manuscripts and the "Egyptian" alphabet/grammar, worked on at Kirtland, Ohio, is today preserved by the LDS Church.

As the essay explains, and the LDS Church acknowledges for the first time: "Neither the rules nor the translations in the grammar book correspond to those recognized by Egyptologists today. None of the characters on the papyrus fragments mentioned Abraham's name or any of the events recorded in the book of Abraham. Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham."³⁷⁸ This statement is not a religious issue and was not made to question a member's faith commitment to scripture but one of what does the Egyptian writing say.

This is an important statement that summarizes the reason why what was once regarded as an ancient Egyptian papyrus produced by Abraham is of modern composition. The writing of the "Book of Abraham" is interesting given the time period when it was produced, but from all indications it is not a record of Abraham.

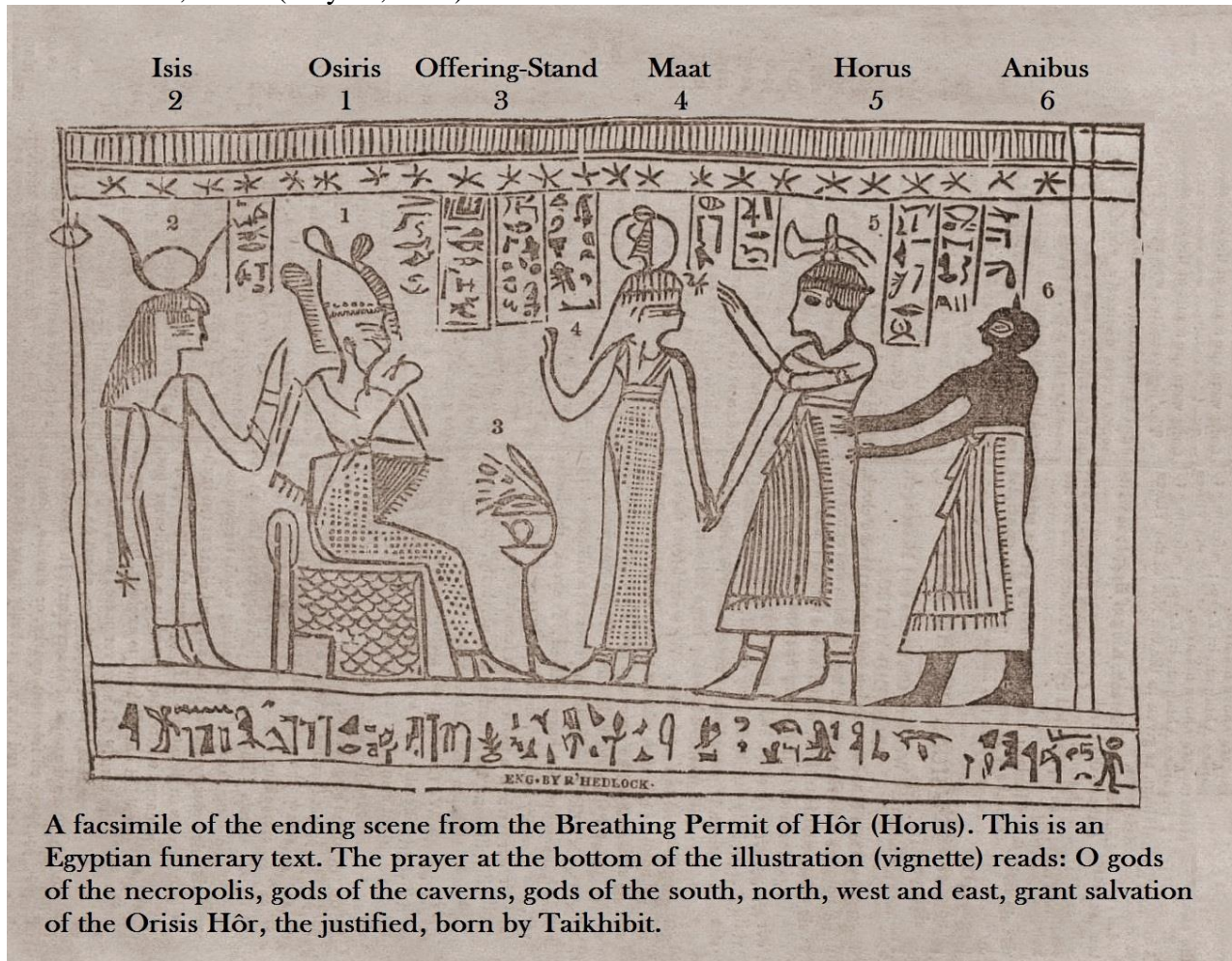
³⁷⁶ See for example later translations, by Robert K. Ritner, "The 'Breathing Permit of Hôr' among the Joseph Smith Papyri," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62 (2003):161-80; and Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: FARMS, Brigham Young University, 2002).

³⁷⁷ Robert K. Ritner, *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri: A Complete Edition* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2011); paperback edition (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2013).

³⁷⁸ "Translation and Historicity of the Book of Abraham," posted on www.lds.org, (under Gospel Topics), July 8, 2014.

Some other faith communities originating with Joseph Smith, such as the Community of Christ (formerly known as the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints), approach the “Book of Abraham” as a work of theological speculation and do not include it in their own scriptural canon.³⁷⁹ Also smaller restoration churches of Christ do not include the book of Abraham in their scriptures.

An example that confirms what Egyptologists and the LDS Church have maintained (no name or story about Abraham), is Facsimile No. 3. It is represented to be “from the Book of Abraham” but his name does not appear there. This illustration below was published in the *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 14 (May 16, 1842):783.



A facsimile of the ending scene from the Breathing Permit of Hôr (Horus). This is an Egyptian funerary text. The prayer at the bottom of the illustration (vignette) reads: O gods of the necropolis, gods of the caverns, gods of the south, north, west and east, grant salvation of the Orisis Hôr, the justified, born by Taikhibit.

The reason why there is a difference between what Smith explained and an actual translation of the characters on Facsimile No. 3 is because Joseph Smith could not correctly interpret the ancient Egyptian characters. In this example he said that the names of figures 2, 4, and 5: King Pharaoh, Prince of Pharaoh, and Shulem are represented in “the characters above his

³⁷⁹ See Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development*, 2nd ed., rev. and enl. (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1995), 192-210; Mark A. Scherer, *The Journey of a People: The Era of Restoration, 1820-1844* (Independence, Missouri: Community of Christ Seminary Press, 2013), 261-62.

head,” “as written above the hand,” and “as represented by the characters above his hand.” Like many others of his time Smith did not know the Egyptian language by scholarly means or through inspiration.

While Joseph Smith may be "the first native-born American who is known to have made an effort to translate writings and to interpret vignettes found on ancient Egyptian funerary papyri," his translations, according to John A. Larson of the Oriental Institute at the University of Chicago in 1994, "can, at best, be described as unorthodox." Nevertheless, Larson continues, "the position of the Mormon prophet is secure within the early history of American speculation about ancient Egypt. As a manifestation of American interest in the culture of ancient Egypt, the story of Joseph Smith and his ancient Egyptian mummies and papyri is one of the more curious chapters in the early history of American Egyptology."³⁸⁰

Egyptologist Lanny Bell, formerly of the University of Chicago and since of Brown University, adds: “Smith's approach to the translation of ancient Egyptian documents ranks him squarely in the tradition of the esoteric interpretation of hieroglyphics...[Given the] disagreement[s], even rancor, over the decipherment of hieroglyphics persisting among Egyptologists until well after his death in 1844, we should hardly expect Joseph Smith to have been able to familiarize himself with Champollion's work, properly assess its validity, and possibly incorporate it into his own translation of the papyrus he had before him.”³⁸¹

I wrote concerning the Egyptian papyrus Joseph Smith used: “Instead of this scroll being the writings of Abraham, the papyrus has no connection with Abraham or his time. In producing the text of the Book of Abraham parts of Genesis were copied and revised to make it appear authentic. Joseph Smith was human, however considering his claim to correctly translate Egyptian into the English of the Book of Abraham we find that it offers no more than a pretended translation from the Egyptian.”³⁸²

Joseph Smith’s Instruction on the Three Facsimiles of the “Book of Abraham”

March 1, 1842, Willard Richards recorded:
at his office, & the printing office correcting the first plate or cut. Of the Records of father Abraham. Prepared by Reuben Hadlock [Hedlock] for the Times & Season.³⁸³

³⁸⁰ John A. Larson, "Joseph Smith and Egyptology: An Early Episode in the History of American Speculation about Ancient Egypt, 1835-1844," in David P. Silverman, ed., *For His Ka: Essays Offered in Memory of Klaus Baer* (Chicago: Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1994), 160.

³⁸¹ Lanny Bell, "The Ancient Egyptian 'Books of Breathing,' the Mormon 'Book of Abraham,' and the Development of Egyptology in America," in Stephen E. Thompson and Peter Der Manuelian, eds., *Egypt and Beyond: Essays Presented to Leonard H. Lesko upon His Retirement from the Wilbour Chair of Egyptology at Brown University, June 2005* (Providence, Rhode Island: Brown University, Department of Egyptology and Ancient Western Asian Studies, 2008), 30, 33.

³⁸² H. Michael Marquardt, comp., *The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers* (Cullman, Alabama: Printing Service, 1981), 191. Reprinted in 2009 by Utah Lighthouse Ministry in Salt Lake City.

³⁸³ “The Book of the Law of the Lord,” MS 22507, 88, Church History Library, Salt Lake City. Printed in Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841-April 1843* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 39.

March 2, 1842, Willard Richards recorded:

Read the Proof of the “Times and Seasons” as Editor for the First time, No. 9 Vol. 3d. in which is the commencement of the Book of Abraham.³⁸⁴

March 4, 1842, Willard Richards recorded:

Exhibeting [Exhibiting] the Book of Abraham. in the original. To Bro Hadlock [Hedlock]. So that he might take the size of the several plates or cuts. & prepare the blocks for the Times & Seasons. & also gave instruction concerning the arrangement of the writing on the Large cut. Illustrating the principles of Astronomy.³⁸⁵

In the *Times and Seasons*, it is claimed for each illustration to be “A FAC-SIMILE FROM THE BOOK OF ABRAHAM.”³⁸⁶

“Book of Abraham,” *Times and Seasons* 3, no. 9 (March 1, 1842):703-706, including facsimile No. 1 on page 703

Times and Seasons 3, no. 10 (March 15, 1842):719-722, including facsimile No. 2

Times and Seasons 3, no. 9 (May 16, 1842):783-784, including facsimile No. 3

Making a Complete Circle

Reuben Hedlock followed Joseph Smith’s instructions which resulted in making the second illustration (plate or cut) appear as a complete circle of an original hypocephalus. Joseph Smith had material from other Egyptian texts added to the picture. In the damaged circle area (illustrated by the hand copy) both internal and external characters were incorporated to make the picture appear a complete. This simple fact indicates that Joseph Smith wants the reader to visualize the printed illustration with no damage.

References to Facsimile No. 1 in the text of the “Book of Abraham”

Times and Seasons 3:309, 4th paragraph:

that you might have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record ... that you may have an understanding of these Gods, I have given you the fashion of them in the figures, at the beginning³⁸⁷

³⁸⁴ “The Book of the Law of the Lord,” MS 22507, 88, Church History Library; *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841-April 1843*, 39.

³⁸⁵ “The Book of the Law of the Lord,” MS 22507, 89, Church History Library; *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841-April 1843*, 40.

³⁸⁶ *Times and Seasons* Volume 3:703, between 720 and 721, 783, Nauvoo, Illinois.

³⁸⁷ Robin Scott Jensen and Brian M. Hauglid, eds., *Revelations and Translations, Volume 4: Book of Abraham and Related Manuscripts, Facsimile Edition* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2018), 309.

Willard Richards, 1842, p. 5:

refer you to the representation at the commencement of this Record. ... That you may have an understanding of these Gods. I have given you the fashion of them in the figures, at the beginning³⁸⁸

Warren Parrish, 1835, p. 3:

that you might have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation, at the commencement of this record. ... that you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fasion of them, in the figures at the beginning³⁸⁹

Warren Parrish, 1835, p. 2:

that you might have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation, ~~that is lying before you~~ at the commencement of this record. ... that you may have an understanding of these gods, I have given you the fassion of them, in the figures, at the beginning³⁹⁰

Frederick G. Williams, 1835, p-2:

that you might have a knowl=

-edge of this alter <I will refer you to the representation that is at the (commencement of this record> ... that you may have an understanding of their gods I have given you the fashion of them in the figures, at the beginning³⁹¹

Excerpt from *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844* (Web Version, 2020):

Joseph Smith's view in the Book of Abraham is different in the context of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic belief in one God. One way to understand this is to know that Smith's religious beliefs changed over time. By this time (1842), he taught that there were many gods and that believers could become gods; also that there were Gods who had direction over the creation of this earth. The monotheism in the Book of Mormon and Smith's corrections in the writings of Moses in Genesis made it clear his beliefs that there is only one God. The oneness of God was worked on in the lectures on theology (known as the Lectures on Faith). The ideas relating to God developed in the church and moved toward two separate members of the Godhead though there were varying degrees of this teaching. By 1839 Joseph Smith's idea of a governing council of Gods (polytheism) started to formulate. So when Smith worked on the latter portion of the text of the Book of Abraham in Nauvoo he already accepted polytheism, though in LDS terms it is known as the plurality of Gods. The concept of a council of Gods of creation was incorporated into Latter-day Saint temple worship in Nauvoo. The endowment ceremony contained the idea of a council of Gods giving direction for the creation of the world. (358)

³⁸⁸ *Revelations and Translations, Volume 4:257.*

³⁸⁹ *Revelations and Translations, Volume 4:223.*

³⁹⁰ *Revelations and Translations, Volume 4:207, 209.*

³⁹¹ *Revelations and Translations, Volume 4:195, 197.*

The Relationship of the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham³⁹²

Book of Abraham

While dictating the Book of Abraham (what is now chapter 2) Joseph Smith used the KJV Genesis as a guide and text for part of his story. The actual wording in the story suggests the use of Genesis in composing this work. This would indicate that the wording dictated was basically a copying effort of a pre-established text. At times Smith revised the KJV text to make it an autobiographical account by Abraham. The wording as printed in the KJV was used as part of the text Abraham supposedly wrote by his own hand. It is clear that Joseph Smith had the Bible open to the book of Genesis as he dictated this section of the Book of Abraham.

The contents of part of Translation Manuscripts Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (written in 1835) have as a source two verses of Genesis chapter 11. Also Manuscripts Nos. 1 and 2 used chapter 12 from KJV Genesis for the new Abraham story. These Translation Manuscripts are part of the writings of Joseph Smith, written by his scribes William W. Phelps, Frederick G. Williams, and Warren Parrish. Compare the Book of Abraham text to that recorded in Genesis:

<u>Joseph Smith's story of Abraham</u>	<u>Genesis, Old Testament</u>
Abraham 2:1-2	Genesis 11:28-29
Abraham 2:3	Genesis 12:1
Abraham 2:9	Genesis 12:2
Abraham 2:11	Genesis 12:3
Abraham 2:14-15, 18	Genesis 12:4-6

The text for Abraham 2:9, 11, 14-15, 18 is found only in Translation Manuscript No. 1 (pages 8-10) written from Joseph Smith's dictation by Warren Parrish. The actual Egyptian characters used to represent the text of the Book of Abraham when translated into English by Egyptologists does not correspond to the Abraham/Genesis text or subject matter.³⁹³

³⁹² This chapter comes from chapters sixteen and nine printed in *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844*. The current Book of Abraham text from Abraham 1:1-2:18 was written in 1835 at Kirtland, Ohio while Abraham 2:19-5:21 with three illustrations was written in 1842 at Nauvoo, Illinois. A brief study on the Joseph Smith papyri has implications upon the authenticity of the Book of Mormon.

³⁹³ See studies by Robert K. Ritner, "The 'Breathing Permit of Hôr' Thirty-four Years Later," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 33 (Winter 2000):97-119; Ritner, "'The Breathing Permit of Hôr' among the Joseph Smith Papyri," *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* 62 (July 2003):161-80; and Michael D. Rhodes, *The Hor Book of Breathings: A Translation and Commentary* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, Brigham Young University, 2002). See chapter 21 for additional information when the Book of Abraham was published in 1842.

From close examination, it is correct that Egyptian documents were once in the hands of Joseph Smith. Smith possessed no knowledge of the Egyptian language at any period of time while he was studying and producing his Egyptian papers. Joseph Smith was human; however, considering his claim to correctly translate Egyptian into English, it offers no more than a pretended translation from the Egyptian.

These primary historical documents are important because they show that the scribes were taking dictation from Joseph Smith. The Egyptian papers, including the Egyptian Alphabet, contain the record of Joseph Smith's efforts to work with ancient documents. One of the manuscripts of the "Egyptian alphabet" contains Joseph Smith's handwriting, together with the handwriting of his scribe Oliver Cowdery. These 1835 documents help us understand how Smith dictated the text of the Book of Mormon six years earlier. The Egyptian Alphabet and related papers are preserved manuscript texts that show how Joseph Smith produced the ideas prior to and in connection with the Book of Abraham. These records have serious implications for the dictation process of the text of the Book of Mormon.

In his work on the Book of Mormon, before Joseph Smith commenced to dictate, he reportedly transcribed an Egyptian alphabet from the record of the Book of Mormon. Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph Smith's mother, described the importance of her son copying characters of an alphabet to show to the learned. The characters were reportedly in the Egyptian language and were to be shown to those who professed knowledge in languages other than English. Lucy wrote in her history (dictated in 1845), the following concerning the year 1827:

It soon became necessary to take some measures to accomplish the translation of the record into English but he [Joseph Smith] was instructed to take off a fac simile of the ~~alphabet Egyptian~~ characters <composing the alphabet which were called reformed egyptian> Alphabetically and send them to all the learned men that he could find and ask them for the translation of the same.³⁹⁴

Lucy continued her narrative concerning the Egyptian alphabet:

Joseph started [in] Dec[ember]. for Penn[sylvania] it was agreed that Martin Har[r]is should follow him as soon as he <Joseph> should have sufficient time to transcribe the Egyptian alphabet which Mr. Harris was to take to the east and through the country in every direction to all who professed linguists to give them an oportunity [opportunity] of showing their talents.³⁹⁵

That the characters were to be from an alphabet was clear when Lucy Smith addressed the church conference in October 1845. Lucy said that she had been called "upon by Joseph to go & tell Martin Harris & family that he [Joseph] had got the Plates & he wanted him [Martin] to take an a[l]phabet of the Characters & carry them to the learned men to decypher."³⁹⁶

³⁹⁴ Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 393.

³⁹⁵ Lucy Mack Smith, Manuscript Draft. See Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 402.

³⁹⁶ Norton Jacob, Journal, October 8, 1845, CHL. See Ronald O. Barney, *The Mormon Vanguard Brigade of 1847: Norton Jacob's Record* (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2005), 53.

Joseph Smith's father understood that the last recorded plate of the Book of Mormon contained the alphabet as he explained to Fayette Lapham about 1830: "The remaining pages [of the gold plates] were closely written over in characters of some unknown tongue, the last containing the alphabet of this unknown language."³⁹⁷

One of the learned persons whom Martin Harris visited in 1828 was Professor Charles Anthon of New York City. Harris took with him the characters which Joseph Smith had transcribed as a sample of what was contained on the record. In two of his three letters recalling this incident Professor Anthon wrote about the sheet of paper which contained the characters of Smith's alphabet. The first extract is from Anthon's 1834 letter and the second one was written in 1841:

This paper was in fact a singular scrawl. It consisted of all kinds of crooked characters disposed in columns, and had evidently been prepared by some person who had before him at the time a book containing various alphabets.³⁹⁸

The import of what I wrote was, as far as I can now recollect, simply this, that the marks in the paper appeared to be merely an imitation of various alphabetic characters, and had in my opinion no meaning at all connected with them.³⁹⁹

These references indicate that the first thing Joseph Smith did was to prepare an alphabet of the Book of Mormon. Professor Anthon commented that the characters appeared to be various alphabetical characters.

Joseph Smith's work on his Book of Abraham Egyptian alphabet, seven years later, shows that he could not understand or interpret documents written anciently. Examinations done by Egyptologists show that Smith had not the slightest idea what the Egyptian characters meant relating to names, places, and subject matter. These manuscript pages clearly show that Joseph Smith pretended to translate Egyptian records. The claim that they had been written by the biblical Abraham is without a solid foundation.

The manuscript pages show that Smith used the Bible as he did when he dictated the Book of Mormon text. In April 1829 Joseph Smith received a revelation for his scribe Oliver Cowdery. Cowdery evidently tried to dictate some words but could not. Smith explained in the revelation:

But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right. But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you

³⁹⁷ "The Mormons," *Historical Magazine* 7 (May 1870):307. See Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 1:462-63.

³⁹⁸ Charles Anthon to Eber D. Howe, February 17, 1834, published in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 271; in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 4:380.

³⁹⁹ Anthon to Rev. T. W. Coit, April 3, 1841, *The Church Record* 1 (1841):231; in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* 4:384-85.

to forget the thing which is wrong; therefore, you cannot write that which is sacred save it be given you from me.⁴⁰⁰

If the above is a correct description of how Joseph Smith produced the Book of Mormon text, then it is an insight into the process of Joseph Smith's revelations, restoration of biblical texts, the Egyptian Alphabet, and the Book of Abraham. Whatever came into the mind of Smith and that he dictated was considered to be inspired. John Whitmer, who had been another scribe when Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon and later some of his revision of the Bible, wrote in his history:

Joseph the Seer saw these Record[s] and by the revelation of Jesus Christ could translate these records, which gave an account of our forefathers, ~~even abraham~~ Much of which was written by Joseph of Egypt who was sold by his brethren Which when all translated will be a pleasing history and of great value to the saints.⁴⁰¹

In 1829 when Joseph Smith dictated portions of the text of the Book of Mormon, he read from the common Bible of the day, the King James Version. This became part of the process by which he composed the Book of Mormon. Passages in the Book of Mormon, when compared with the KJV, show that the Bible was used when it was being dictated to and recorded by a scribe.

Only part of the original 1829 manuscript of the Book of Mormon pages of the dictated text is extant. We do not have the gold plates to determine the accuracy of Joseph Smith's dictation from the Egyptian. But we do have the Egyptian papyri, Joseph Smith's Egyptian Alphabet, and the Book of Abraham Translation Manuscripts. These later manuscripts together with Joseph Smith's journal and knowing when his scribes worked with him all place the dictation process in the last half of 1835. With this historical background, we have enough information to examine Joseph Smith's competence with the ancient Egyptian language.

None of Joseph Smith's scribes or witnesses to the plates of the Book of Mormon saw Joseph Smith consult the gold plates when he dictated the text. Just as no one said they saw Joseph Smith use the Bible when he dictated the Book of Mormon, no one said they saw him use the Bible as he dictated part of the text of the Book of Abraham. Warren Parrish described the time when he was taking dictation from Joseph:

I have set [sic] by his [Joseph Smith's] side and penned down the translation of the Egyptian Hieroglyphicks as he claimed to receive it by direct inspiration from Heaven.⁴⁰²

This clearly indicates that Parrish sat by Smith's side, and took dictation from him as Smith interpreted the Egyptian writing by direct inspiration. This is the same way that Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon text in 1829. It appears that the same method was used for

⁴⁰⁰ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 37; LDS D&C 9:8-9; RLDS D&C 9:3.

⁴⁰¹ Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 167.

⁴⁰² Parrish to the Editor, February 5, 1838, *Painesville Republican* 2 (February 15, 1838).

both the Book of Mormon and the Book of Abraham. By making a transcript of an alphabet to the Egyptian language for these records it is clear that both books were to be in a form of ancient Egyptian. The manuscripts of the Book of Abraham and related papers serve as a good model to know how well Joseph Smith understood and interpreted ancient Egyptian characters.

The clear implication of a study of the Joseph Smith Egyptian Papers is that Joseph Smith had no knowledge of the ancient Egyptian language. Smith did not know how to translate ancient documents. If as John Whitmer and Warren Parrish suggests, Joseph Smith received a revelation regarding the contents of the Egyptian records, then the revelation gave the wrong meaning. It does not matter how Joseph Smith arrived at his interpretation of Egyptian characters, his reading of the characters is at variance with the ancient text and is incorrect. The real value of the Egyptian Alphabet and the Translation Manuscripts of the Book of Abraham is that they show us that Joseph Smith cannot get the interpretation of the Egyptian right through either linguistic study or inspiration.

This raises the question of how reliable his work on the Book of Mormon would be. The Book of Mormon is represented to have been written by the hand of a man named Mormon in a form of Egyptian. Without a working knowledge of the Egyptian language, Joseph Smith would have others believe that he could make a correct interpretation of an ancient text. Whatever would come from his mouth as he dictated the Book of Mormon, Egyptian Alphabet, and Book of Abraham was considered inspired.

All indications are that since Smith did not really translate from an ancient language in his work on the Book of Abraham, he could not be trusted in his earlier dictation, when he reportedly had a record written in the same basic language. The material he produced indicates that he had a vivid and creative imagination as the dictated text to his religious documents shows. David P. Wright, associate professor of Bible and Ancient Near East at Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts, wrote concerning Joseph Smith's works including the Book of Abraham:

This work is basically a reworking of the English biblical text (some Hebrew learning is exhibited as well, but not much). Consequently, in all his work [the Book of Mormon, the Joseph Smith Revision of the Bible, and the Book of Abraham] there is a consistency in approach and method: he is not working in any of them with ancient languages (except for the bit of Hebrew in Abraham) and in all of them there is attention (to a greater or lesser degree) to revising or responding to the KJV. (This common character of all the works shows, by the way, that Smith, and not some other nineteenth-century personage, is the author of the Book of Mormon.)⁴⁰³

⁴⁰³ David P. Wright, "'In Plain Terms that We May Understand': Joseph Smith's Transformation of Hebrews in Alma 12-13," in Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology* (Salt Lake City, Signature Books, 1993), 211.

Literary Dependence in the Book of Mormon: Two Studies

The Book of Mormon⁴⁰⁴ contains fifteen books (one called Words of Mormon) that tell the religious and social history of the people it describes. The work is an abridgement of previous records. The main story takes place in Jerusalem near 600 B.C.E. and ends in America about 421 C.E.⁴⁰⁵ It explains that God called Lehi to be a prophet; the family, led primarily by his son Nephi, came by ship to the promised land. Two groups of the house of Israel are chiefly mentioned, the Lamanites and the Nephites. The record tells of their rulers, wars, and religious experiences covering to the time of Christ. A unique part of the book is the appearance of Jesus Christ among the natives after his crucifixion. The book 3 Nephi contains the teachings of Jesus including the establishment of his church.

The downfall of the Nephites is described with the records being written by Mormon and his son Moroni. The survivors are the Lamanites, ancestors to the Native Americans. A short book is the Book of Ether telling about an earlier trip to America by ship (eight barges) shortly after the building of the biblical tower mentioned in Genesis. This other group is known as the Jaredites. The last writing is the Book of Moroni giving a pattern to follow for church ordinances. The Book of Mormon is written in biblical style as a prophetic work to make things clearer than the Bible but in an American setting.

The abridgement was written to the descendents of the Lamanites, and also to Jew and Gentile. It was in essence a Native American book containing historical and religious writings of their ancestors. The title page tells its purpose—"to the convincing of the Jew and Gentile that JESUS is the CHRIST, the ETERNAL GOD."

Whether the Book of Mormon is an ancient record or a modern creation, it demands serious examination, since it is represented to be Judeo-Christian scripture produced in the New World in pre-Columbian times. One such task is determining the extent to which the Bible, especially the New Testament, was used as a source in its production, and if so, what this may mean regarding the historicity of the Book of Mormon. Another task is weighing the evidence of nineteenth-century events reflected in the Book of Mormon and, again, considering its significance for the historicity of the Book of Mormon.

⁴⁰⁴ Since a number of churches use and publish the Book of Mormon, the edition used in this chapter is the 1981 edition published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah. In 1982 it was renamed and the title is now *The Book of Mormon: Another Testament of Jesus Christ*. The versification is the same as the 1879 Salt Lake edition and as used by the Church of Jesus Christ in Monongahela, Pennsylvania, and called "The Record of the Nephites" by the Church of Christ (with the Elijah Message) in Independence, Missouri. The edition of Community of Christ (formerly the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints) also headquartered in Independence, Missouri, has different versification but the chapters numbers are the same as the 1830 first edition. The Church of Christ (Temple Lot) and other Latter Day Saint churches and groups use this latter versification.

⁴⁰⁵ C.E. (Common Era) and B.C.E. (Before the Common Era) are alternate designations corresponding to A.D. and B.C. and are often used in scholarly literature.

Literary Dependence on the Bible

The twenty-seven books of the New Testament were originally written between about 50-100 C.E. Yet numerous phrases from the New Testament appear in sections of the Book of Mormon ostensibly dating to hundreds of years before the birth of Jesus. This suggests that those sections are of much later composition. Consider a few of these New Testament phrases (written after 30 C.E.) which appear in 1 Nephi-Helaman (recorded 600 B.C.E.-1 C.E.): "ye must pray always, and not faint" (2 Ne. 32:9/Luke 18:1); some will go "into everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Mosiah 26:27/Matt. 25:41); but "then shall the righteous shine forth in the kingdom of God" (Alma 40:25/Matt. 13:43). Believers should be "steadfast and immovable, always abounding in good works" (Mosiah 5:15/1 Cor. 15:58); ultimately this "mortal shall put on immortality" (Enos 27/1 Cor. 15:53), but until that day they need to grow "in the nurture and admonition of the Lord" (Enos 1/Eph. 6:4). Notice also that "Jew and Gentile, both bond and free, both male and female" (2 Ne. 10:16/Gal. 3:28), who fight against Zion shall perish. God is "the same, yesterday, today, and forever" (2 Ne. 2:4/Heb. 13:8); while believers "endured the crosses of the world, and despised the shame" (2 Ne. 9:18/Heb. 12:2). Finally, "if their works have been filthiness they must needs be filthy" (1 Ne. 15:33/Rev. 22:11).

The Book of Mormon asserts that ancient New World peoples possessed most of the Old Testament. However, Book of Mormon peoples would not have had access to the New Testament. Those who believe in the book's antiquity try to reconcile the presence of New Testament phrases by suggesting that in translating the book Joseph Smith was given an understanding of ideas on the golden plates but had to choose the words to express them. Consequently, where a thought was sufficiently close to biblical wording he adopted or adapted the biblical phrase. This does not sufficiently explain why he implemented the King James style throughout and not a more original style. It also ignores the fact that the adaptation of biblical texts is deeper than mere use of phrases from the New Testament in the Old Testament time period. The Book of Mormon does not simply introduce random New Testament phrases. It reflects on and expands New Testament meanings in an Old Testament context and creates Old Testament events that flow from these New Testament interpretations.

Alma 12 and 13 provide a good example of this dependence in their use of the New Testament Epistle to the Hebrews. Hebrews employs Genesis 14:18-20 together with Psalm 2:7 and 110:4 to establish that the Messiah holds a priesthood higher than that of the Levitical priesthood, and that this priesthood "after the order of Melchisedec" superseded and abolished the Levitical one (Heb. 5:5-10; 6:20; 7:1-12). ("Melchizedek" is the spelling in Old Testament and contemporary LDS usage.) The Book of Mormon builds on this New Testament interpretation and adds its own misinterpretation to create an entire order of priests "after the order of the Son" (Alma 13:9), "being a type of his order" (v. 16), of whom Melchizedek is but the leading example (v. 19). Furthermore, Hebrew's interpretation of Melchizedek's name and title ("King of righteousness . . . King of peace") is expanded into an imaginary historical situation in which Melchizedek successfully calls his people to repentance and thus to righteousness and peace. This material is then worked together into a systematic doctrinal exposition that utilizes other New Testament phrases from such sources as the Gospels, 1 Corinthians, and Revelation. (Compare Alma 13:9, 13, 22 with parallel phrases in John 1:14; Matt. 3:8; Luke 2:10; and Alma 12:20; 13:28 with 1 Cor. 15:51-53; 10:13; also Alma 12:14, 16, 17, and 13:11 with Rev. 6:16; 20:5-6, 14-15; 19:20; 14:10-11; 20:10, and 7:14.)

The Book of Mormon's own theological statements, therefore, are drawn from, depend on, expand, and explain interpretations already present in the New Testament. In using New Testament interpretations and material as a basis for building such theological statements and exposition throughout the book, New Testament quotations become a part of the fabric of the Book of Mormon text and cannot be regarded as mere figures of speech employed in translating.

A second feature of the Book of Mormon's use of the Bible is how it presents prophecies about the New Testament time period. In 1 and 2 Nephi (600-545 B.C.E.) are prophecies of the coming of Jesus Christ. The prophecies in these two books use the language recorded in the New Testament, even the phrasing of the King James Version. These events in the life and ministry of Jesus were recorded in the New Testament and written by the men then involved. Since the Book of Mormon did not appear until 1830, it is easy for the book to prophesy of events that had already occurred. Indeed, material in the Old Testament part of the Book of Mormon reads like a late Christian document, written after the New Testament was compiled.

Furthermore, the Book of Mormon preaches the "doctrine of Christ" nearly 600 years before Jesus initiated his ministry in Palestine. Notice the use of Christian terms and doctrine of "the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, which is one God" (2 Ne. 31:21) which comes from Matthew 28:19. This formula also occurs in Alma 11:44 (about 82 B.C.E.), but nowhere in the Hebrew Bible is anything of this type mentioned. The Book of Mormon throughout its Old Testament period material uses ideas and doctrines that come from the New Testament.

The Book of Mormon teaches that "many plain and precious things" were "taken away" from the Bible: "they have taken away from the gospel of the Lamb many parts which are plain and most precious" (1 Ne. 13:26, 28). The claim that writings were taken "from the gospel of the Lamb" is problematic. In fact, when one examines the New Testament manuscript material, which reaches back to the second century C.E., evidence that material was taken away is lacking.

There are, however, some places where material was added. One such example is Mark 16:9-20. This passage was probably added to Mark during the second century. Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus, both written in the fourth century, along with a few other New Testament Greek manuscripts, do not contain this addition. Most New Testament scholars, after examining early manuscripts that contain Mark 16, find that the early writings of the church fathers support the view that verses 9-20 were originally not part of Mark.⁴⁰⁶ Interestingly, passages in the King James Version of Mark 16:9-20 appear in three separate places in the Book of Mormon: 3 Nephi 11:33-34; Mormon 9:22-24 and Ether 4:18.

The Book of Mormon justifies this use of the Bible, and especially New Testament words and ideas, by suggesting that Christianity existed in Old Testament times: "Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another" (2 Ne. 29:8). Were these same words spoken to ancient Hebrew prophets? By examining Old Testament documents, we can see that the Book of Mormon has a gospel that was not taught and practiced in the Old Testament period. Rather, it was taught when Jesus and his apostles preached it as recorded only in the New Testament.

When Joseph Smith was in the process of dictating the religious text of the Book of Mormon, he would at times read longer passages from the Old Testament to his scribe. A close examination indicates that chapters from Old Testament books were incorporated into the Book

⁴⁰⁶ See, for example, George Eldon Ladd, *The New Testament and Criticism* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1967), 72-74.

of Mormon. In these places, Smith was dependent upon the Bible with the meaning essentially the same. An exception is the verses from Isaiah 29 added to 2 Nephi—it was expanded to make it fit Martin Harris's visit with the learned Professor Charles Anthon. The following chart contains examples of passages used:

<u>Book of Mormon</u>	<u>Old Testament</u>
1 Nephi 20-21	Isaiah 48-49
2 Nephi 7	Isaiah 50
2 Nephi 8:1-23	Isaiah 51
2 Nephi 12-24	Isaiah 2-14
2 Nephi 20:24-34	Isaiah 10:24-34
2 Nephi 26:14-19	Isaiah 29:3-5
2 Nephi 27:1-35	Isaiah 29:6-24
2 Nephi 30:11-15	Isaiah 11:5-9
Mosiah 12:21-24	Isaiah 52:7-10
Mosiah 13:12-24	Exodus 20:4-17
Mosiah 14	Isaiah 53
3 Nephi 20:41-45	Isaiah 52:11-15
3 Nephi 21:12-18, 21	Micah 5:8-14, 15
3 Nephi 22	Isaiah 54
3 Nephi 24-25	Malachi 3-4

The majority of the chapters originate from the book of Isaiah. Since the printing of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon an earlier Hebrew text of Isaiah was discovered in 1947. Fragments and a large scroll of Isaiah (1QIsa^a; copied circa 125 B.C.E.) were found in the Judean Desert caves near the Dead Sea and are part of the Dead Sea Scrolls. The variants in these manuscripts help clarify the textual tradition when they were made. A basic comparison with the Isaiah in the Book of Mormon indicates that the King James Bible became the standard text when dictating the above texts for the Book of Mormon.⁴⁰⁷

The Book of Mormon is part modern and part ancient, the ancient part coming from the Bible itself. Many familiar themes that are pre-Christian and contained in the earlier portion of the Book of Mormon are found in the Old Testament. Book of Mormon writers reportedly possessed these writings, and it would be natural for Israelite ideas to be in a book of Semitic origin.⁴⁰⁸

⁴⁰⁷ See David P. Wright, "Joseph Smith's Interpretation of Isaiah in the Book of Mormon," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 31 (Winter 1998):181-206. See also *Scrolls from Qumrân Cave I: The Great Isaiah Scroll, The Order of the Community, The Peshet to Habakkuk*, From photographs by John C. Trever (Jerusalem: The Albright Institute of Archaeological Research and the Shrine of the Book, 1972); and Martin Abegg Jr., Peter Flint, and Eugene Ulrich, translated and with commentary, *The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible: The Oldest Known Bible Translated for the First Time into English* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999).

⁴⁰⁸ For a theory that the Book of Mormon is part ancient and part modern with expansive commentary by Joseph Smith see Blake T. Ostler, "The Book of Mormon as a Modern

During the ministry of Jesus in Palestine, his disciples did not understand much of what he said to them. After his resurrection, they began to know what he meant, and a few wrote down accounts as they remembered them. A passage from John 12:16 emphasizes: "These things understood not his disciples at the first: but when Jesus was glorified, then remembered they that these things were written of him, and that they had done these things unto him" (see also Mark 9:32; Luke 9:45, 18:34).

By contrast, the Book of Mormon states that Nephite prophets already understood Jesus's mission, including the date of his birth, the name of his mother, and his baptism, death, resurrection, and miracles. In relating these events, it uses later knowledge (written and recorded in the New Testament) and retroactively places them in a historical situation that predates Jesus's birth. These anachronisms mark the Book of Mormon as a work produced after Jesus was resurrected and the Christian church established.

The central book in the Book of Mormon is the book of Third Nephi.⁴⁰⁹ It is represented as having been recorded upon plates of gold and abridged by the hand of a historian named Mormon. This book purports to give an account of Jesus Christ appearing in ancient America soon after His resurrection. This section will demonstrate that many passages from the New Testament were used for the Third Nephi account. What is being examined is the authenticity of the record of Third Nephi (i.e., its ancient character) and not the expression of Christ-like teaching.⁴¹⁰

This reported visit is the climatic and central story in the Book of Mormon. Just prior to that supposed visitation, Third Nephi depicts vast destruction occurring on the American continent over a period of three hours, simultaneous with Jesus's crucifixion (3 Ne. 8:19). Following this, thick darkness came upon the face of the land for the space of three days. The surviving American inhabitants heard a voice speaking words that in part were derived directly from the King James New Testament, and which are found exclusively in the Gospel of John.

Behold, I am Jesus Christ the Son of God. ... *I am in the Father, and the Father in me ... I came unto my own, and my own received me not. ... And as many as have received me, to them have I given to become the sons of God . . . as many as shall believe on my name ... in me is the law of Moses fulfilled* (3 Ne. 9:15-17; italics)

Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20 (Spring 1987):66-123. This article contains numerous references to material in the Book of Mormon which has a close relationship to the biblical text. Ostler states, "The presence of the KJV [King James Version] in the book is, it seems to me, indisputable" (102).

⁴⁰⁹ This book was first named "III Nephi" in the 1879 Salt Lake edition.

⁴¹⁰ The question of the wording of the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in Third Nephi is explored in Stan Larson, "The Historicity of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount in 3 Nephi," in Brent Lee Metcalfe, ed., *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993), 115-63. For the Third Nephi account, Nephi supposedly recorded the text soon after the reported visit of Jesus, and this record was later abridged by Mormon, after whom the Book of Mormon is named (see 3 Ne. 16:4, 23:4, 26:7, 11). See Ronald V. Huggins, "Did the Author of 3 Nephi Know the Gospel of Matthew?" *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 30 (Fall 1997):137-48.

added for similar words in John for parallel passages in this discussion; John 14:11, 1:11-12).

Most of these words attributed to Jesus in this Third Nephi passage are found in John's Gospel, and they are actually John's words rather than the words spoken by Jesus himself. The account in Third Nephi has them spoken in America long before John penned them in the Old World circa 90 C.E. The voice continued with further words from John's Gospel as well as from the Book of Revelation.

I am the light and the life of the world (3 Ne. 9:18; John 8:12).

I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end (3 Ne. 9:19; Rev. 21:6, 22:13).

Alpha and *Omega* are the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. Third Nephi opens with this Johannine-derived material and depicts the purported post-resurrection visit of Christ to the Israelites of America. The account reports that a voice "as if it came out of heaven" (11:3) was soon heard in "the land Bountiful" (11:1). The voice echoed the words that opened Jesus's ministry in Palestine: "Behold *my Beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased*, in whom I have glorified my name—hear ye him" (11:7, italics added for parallelisms; cf. Matt. 3:17; Mark 1:11; Luke 3:22; see also Matt. 17:5).⁴¹¹

The Gospel according to John records a time after Christ's resurrection when Thomas, one of Jesus's twelve apostles, expressed unbelief and wished to thrust his hand into the wounded side of the resurrected Jesus to verify the resurrection. Jesus then appeared to the apostles with Thomas present and told him, "reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side." Thomas, now convinced, answered "My Lord and my God" (John 20:24-29). Third Nephi expands upon this event from John's Gospel, reporting that some twenty-five hundred people (3 Ne. 17:25) filed by "one by one" and touched the crucifixion wounds of Jesus's side, hands, and feet, and exclaimed, "Hosanna! Blessed be the name of the Most High God!" (3 Ne. 11:17; see also 19:18).

Jesus gave power to baptize to the twelve disciples whom he commissioned on that day. Because Third Nephi presents Jesus as commanding that there should be no more disputations among the people, a baptismal prayer was given which reflects the words of Matthew's gospel: "Having authority given me of Jesus Christ, I baptize you *in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost*. Amen" (11:25, emphasis added; compare Matt. 28:19). After clarifying that such baptism should be by immersion ("And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water," 11:26), Jesus again utters the words of John 14:11: "I am in the Father, and the Father in me" (11:27).

The doctrines that are reported to have been taught by Jesus to his twelve disciples in the New World are couched in the language of the New Testament, which had not as yet been written. They include the following:

⁴¹¹ Other ideas from the New Testament appear earlier in Third Nephi, such as the "star" in the heavens (3 Ne. 1:21), which was a sign of the birth of Christ (Hel. 14:5) to the people in the New World (see Matt. 2:2, 7, 9-10). And the day before Jesus was born it was claimed that Jesus said, "I come unto my own" (3 Ne. 1:14; cf. John 1:11).

1. Jesus "commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent" (11:32; compare Acts 17:30).
2. Repent and believe in Jesus, "And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized, the same shall be saved; ... And whoso believeth not in me, and is not baptized, shall be damned" (11:33-34; compare Mark 16:16). Here Third Nephi uses words from the ending of Mark that according to scholarly consensus, do not belong in the original biblical text.
3. Whoever believes in Jesus believes in the Father and he will be visited "with fire and with the Holy Ghost" (11:35; compare Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16).
4. Jesus declares: "The Father, and I, and the Holy Ghost are one" (11:36, 27; compare John 10:30).
5. A person must "become as a little child, or ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of God" (11:38; compare Luke 18:16-17; Mark 10:14-15; Matt. 18:3; 19:14).

In reporting the words of Jesus's commissioning of the disciples, the Book of Mormon again draws upon the wording of the as-yet-unwritten New Testament:

Verily, verily, I say unto you, that this is *my doctrine*, and whoso buildeth upon this buildeth *upon my rock*, and *the gates of hell shall not prevail against* them. And whoso shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for *my doctrine*, the same cometh of evil, and is not built *upon my rock*; but he buildeth upon a sandy foundation, and *the gates of hell* stand open to receive such when *the floods* come *and the winds beat upon* them (11:39-40, emphasis added; compare John 7:16-17; Matt. 7:24-27; 16:18; parallel text in Luke 6:47-49).

Jesus, after promising the multitude that he would baptize them "with fire and with the Holy Ghost" (12:1) says to the twelve disciples:

Yea, blessed are they who shall believe in your words, and come down into the depths of humility and be *baptized*, for they shall be visited *with fire* and *with the Holy Ghost*, and shall receive a *remission of their sins* (12:2, emphasis added; compare Matt. 3:11; Luke 3:16; Acts 2:38).

The Third Nephi text next moves to an even heavier dependence upon the New Testament material, attributing to Jesus a retelling of the discourse known as "The Sermon on the Mount" (as recorded in the Gospel according to Matthew). However, these words, which in Matthew belong in a pre-resurrection Jewish/Palestinian setting, are cast into a post-resurrection Nephite context in which the Law of Moses is considered already fulfilled. The sermon in Third Nephi has textual material in it (starting with Matt. 5:3) which makes sense if Jesus is speaking to first-century Jewish religious leaders in Palestine but which is incongruous when directed to a people who have a different culture and speak another language. Nevertheless, the material is presented with the same concepts and vocabulary as recorded in Matthew. Only the most obvious disparities were eliminated from the Third Nephi text, such as the deletion of the

reference in Matthew 5:20 (3 Ne. 12:20) concerning scribes and Pharisees.⁴¹² The time frame has also been altered to make the material fit into the period after the resurrection of Jesus. Otherwise the text of Matthew has remained mostly unchanged.

In keeping with this shift, Third Nephi presents Jesus as adding: "the law is fulfilled," "come unto me and be ye saved," and "except ye shall keep my commandments ... ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven" (12:19-20). To the text of Matthew 5:21, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time," is added "and it is also written before you" (12:21). The added words shift the meaning of Jesus's words away from the original sense they have in Matthew's gospel.

The next verse presents a similar problem of making words that have a distinctive Palestinian setting have any significant meaning to New World people. That verse, taken almost verbatim from the King James Version of Matthew except for the deletion of the words "without a cause," reads:

But I say unto you, that whosoever is angry with his brother shall be in danger of his judgment. And whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council; and whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire. (3 Ne. 12:22)

The use of the Aramaic word Raca (rêqa' or rêqâ), a term of opprobrium, would be meaningless to New World people who are depicted as speaking either Hebrew or reformed Egyptian. A further disparity lies in the phrase "shall be in danger of the council." In the Gospel account the reference is to the Jewish governing body, the Sanhedrin, but has no apparent point of reference in a New World context.

Finally, it is significant that the three words deleted from this verse in Third Nephi ("without a cause") are the same words that the commentaries of Joseph Smith's day had noted were lacking in some early Greek manuscripts. The questionable status of this phrase was therefore well known before work on the Book of Mormon had begun and may have influenced its deletion.⁴¹³ It is also possible that the deletion of the three words may have occurred since people normally would be angry with a cause.

⁴¹² The Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew was used in Third Nephi to document the teachings reportedly spoken by Jesus in America. See Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, MO: Herald House, 1969), 98; (2nd edition, 1995), 84. Krister Stendahl's analysis of "The Sermon on the Mount and Third Nephi" published in Truman G. Madsen, ed., *Reflections on Mormonism: Judaeo-Christian Parallels* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1978), 139-54, argues that the Book of Mormon text of the Sermon on the Mount is not a genuine translation from an ancient language but is Joseph Smith's nineteenth-century targumic expansion of the English King James text. Stendahl's study has been reprinted in Stendahl, *Meanings: The Bible as Document and as Guide* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), 99-113.

⁴¹³ In the commentary on Matthew by Adam Clarke, published as early as 1818 (1825 edition used), comes the following regarding the words "without a cause" in Matt. 5:22: "without a cause, is wanting in the famous Vatican MS. and two others, the Ethiopic, latter Arabic, Saxon, Vulgate, two copies of the old Itala, J. Martyr, Ptolomeus, Origen, Tertullian, and by all the

The words of Matthew 5:27, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery," is rendered in Third Nephi as "Behold, it is written by them of old time, that thou shalt not commit adultery" (12:27). The oldest Greek text of Matthew does not contain the words "by them of old time." New Testament papyrus fragment number 64, which includes this portion of the Sermon on the Mount and is dated about 200 C.E., contains no such words. Including these words in Third Nephi shows its dependence on the rendering of this text in the King James Bible rather than being an independent testament of Jesus Christ.⁴¹⁴

The deletion of "neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King" from the following text removes it from its New Testament setting. This change suggests an effort to make the Gospel text appear appropriate for a New World context.

But I say unto you, Swear not at all; neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: Nor by the earth; for it is his footstool: neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King. (Matt. 5:34-35)

The revised text reads:

But verily, verily, I say unto you, swear not at all; neither by heaven, for it is God's throne; Nor by the earth, for it is his footstool. (3 Ne. 12:34-25)

For Third Nephi to have included the reference in Matthew 5:35 to Jerusalem, "the city of the great King" (wording derived apparently from Ps. 48:2), would have revealed the Old World setting of the passage.⁴¹⁵ After these departures from Matthew, the text in Third Nephi closely follows Matthew's wording in 5:39-42, 44, with but a few words different (compare 3 Ne. 12:39-42, 44). There is an omission of the words "and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust" in verse 45, while Paul's words from 2 Corinthians, "Old things are done away, and all things have become new" are placed on Jesus's lips (12:47; compare 2 Cor. 5:17).

The main body of this material in Third Nephi is derived directly from the Gospel of Matthew, since parallel texts in Mark or Luke are ignored for Matthew's wording. While it is true that, except for the words "should be cast into hell" (12:30), Matthew 5:29-30 is omitted

ancient copies quoted by St. Jerom[e]. It was probably a marginal gloss originally, which in process of time crept into the text." *Clarke's Commentary* 1:71. The phrase is also deleted in Joseph Smith's revision of Matthew in 1831. See New Testament MS 1, p. 10, CCLA, in *The Holy Scriptures* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1991), published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (now Community of Christ), Matthew 5:24. This revision is referred to variously as the Inspired Version (IV) and the Joseph Smith Translation (cited hereafter as JST).

⁴¹⁴ In the manuscript of Joseph Smith's revision, New Testament MS 1, p. 10, the words "them of old time" were written and then crossed out in the manuscript and the text as printed in 3 Nephi 12:27 is written out. The Book of Mormon follows the King James Version and in his revision of the New Testament Joseph Smith used both the KJV and Third Nephi.

⁴¹⁵ In 3 Nephi 12:23 the wording in Matthew 5:23 about bringing "thy gift to the altar" was also removed from the text of Matthew when placed in the Third Nephi record, possibly also to eliminate any Palestinian context.

from the Third Nephi account without any obvious reason, nevertheless the sequence found in Matthew is closely followed. These teachings of Jesus are found in the Gospels of Mark and Luke but are scattered throughout the narratives rather than grouped topically as Matthew records them. Several textual problems contained in this chapter makes these words out of place in a New World setting.⁴¹⁶

Third Nephi 13 continues the presentation of the Sermon on the Mount taken from Matthew 6 but places it on the lips of Jesus as his teaching to the Nephites. This chapter is copied into Third Nephi with very few textual differences from its printing in the King James Bible. Compare the following: 3 Nephi 13:3-9 with Matthew 6:3-9; 3 Nephi 13:11-24 with Matthew 6:12-24; 3 Nephi 13:25(part)-29 with Matthew 6:25-29 and 3 Nephi 13:33 with Matthew 6:33.

In this section, the familiar version of what is known as "The Lord's Prayer" is quoted from Matthew with two phrases deleted in the Third Nephi version. The phrases omitted are (1) "Thy kingdom come" (Matt. 6:10), and (2) "Give us this day our daily bread" (Matt. 6:11). The first phrase is also found in Luke 11:2 and the second phrase appears as "Give us day by day our daily bread" in Luke 11:3. It is not apparent on the surface just why these phrases were omitted since Joseph Smith later included them in his Bible revision.⁴¹⁷

While the deletion of the two phrases may have no significance, it is of great importance to note that the closing of Matthew 6:13 (King James Version) – "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever. Amen"—is included in the Third Nephi text. This closing is widely recognized as an addition to the Matthean text, since the doxology is missing from the most reliable Greek manuscripts, such as the Codex Sinaiticus and Codex Vaticanus (both transcribed during the fourth century). Other manuscripts of Matthew give a variant form of doxology, indicating that this ending was an addition to the Lord's Prayer. Biblical scholars have concluded that the evidence indicates that the doxology became attached to the Matthean text from a liturgical use of the prayer in the early worship services of the Christian churches.⁴¹⁸ Various endings were added to the Lord's Prayer perhaps as early as the second century, and even where the doxology occurs it does so with several variations. It was not until the fourth century that this doxology became fixed and standard in manuscripts of Matthew.⁴¹⁹

Since this doxology was added to some New Testament manuscripts in the Old World in the fourth century, it is highly improbable that this identical wording was spoken by Christ in

⁴¹⁶ As has been stated, many of the changes made in Third Nephi from the King James Matthew are also retained by Joseph Smith when he produced his Bible revision. The following verses in both texts are basically the same: 3 Nephi 12:3-13; compare with Matthew 5:5-15 (JST). When material was added which was not in the Matthew account to the Third Nephi version, these words were used in the Bible revision. See for example: 3 Nephi 12:2 with Matthew 5:4 (JST) and 3 Nephi 12:29-30 with Matthew 5:31 (JST).

⁴¹⁷ The omission of the first phrase cannot be attributed to the theological terminology implied in "Thy kingdom come" for the exhortation of Jesus "But seek ye first the kingdom of God" (Matt. 6:33; compare Luke 12:31) is found in 3 Nephi 13:33.

⁴¹⁸ See Alfred Plummer, *An Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to S. Matthew* (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1956), 103.

⁴¹⁹ In Joseph Smith's revision for the parallel text of the Lord's prayer recorded in Luke 11:4 (JST) he added (after "but deliver us from evil") a part of the doxology added to Matthew—namely, "for thine is the kingdom and power. Amen."

America shortly after His resurrection. A more plausible explanation is that Joseph Smith copied these words from the King James Bible, in ignorance of the textual history, rather than having been spoken by Jesus in the New World. This then would be but another example of the late textual material anachronistically placed into an earlier time-frame in Third Nephi.

One Latter-day Saint scholar has attempted to account for the obvious borrowing of the Third Nephi sermon from the Sermon on the Mount in Matthew:

We recognize the fact that no two independent translators would be likely to translate a large portion of the Sermon word for word the same. That Joseph Smith used the King James version when he came to familiar scripture on the Gold Plates we shall not deny. As long as the Sermon in the familiar rendering of Matthew 5-7 agreed substantially with the Nephite version the prophet used it word for word; otherwise he corrected it to conform with the text before him on the metal plates. In this respect Joseph Smith did only what many translators would have done.⁴²⁰

However, this suggestion that the likeness of the text in Third Nephi was because the King James rendering of Matthew was used when it "agreed substantially with the Nephite version" will not stand. There is no evidence to support including this late fourth-century doxology in the Third Nephi. To hold such a conclusion would mean that Jesus taught to the first-century Nephites a doxology that would incorrectly be added in the fourth century to his words in Matthew.

In chapter 14 of Third Nephi the text again follows almost verbatim what is found in the Sermon on the Mount as recorded in the Gospel of Matthew. Matthew 7:1-17 is here quoted from the King James New Testament (some of which had been previously paraphrased by Jesus in Third Nephi).

If there is still doubt that the author of Third Nephi has borrowed the text of the Matthean Sermon on the Mount, it should be dispelled when even words clearly composed by Matthew, and not attributable to Jesus, are brought over into the Third Nephi account. The Third Nephi text follows Matthew so closely that it even borrows Matthew's transitional phrase: "And it came to pass, when Jesus had ended these sayings" (Matt. 7:28; compare 3 Ne. 15:1). The Third Nephi text claims to have been written long before Matthew composed his account. The Third Nephi writings clearly are based upon a text written years after Jesus's resurrection.

Chapter 15 of Third Nephi presents Jesus as acknowledging that he was teaching the same material he had taught in Palestine, for it reports him saying, "Behold, ye have heard the things which I taught before I ascended to my Father" (15:1). However, the text understandably does not mention that this material was derived from the Gospel of Matthew before Matthew had ever recorded it.

⁴²⁰ Sidney B. Sperry, *Answers to Book of Mormon Questions* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967), 112. The evidence does indicate that the sermons in Third Nephi are in part based upon the KJV New Testament. For a view of one who maintains that the King James Version was not used, see John W. Welch in *The Sermon at the Temple and the Sermon on the Mount* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and Provo, UT: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1990), 148-63.

The Gospel of Matthew was not the only source for the words of Jesus in Third Nephi. Jesus opens chapter 15 explaining in Paul's words from 2 Corinthians that "old things had passed away, and that all things had become new," (a statement borrowed from 2 Corinthians 5:17; compare 3 Nephi 12:47). He adds, "The law which was given unto Moses hath an end in me. Behold I am the law, and the light" (15:8-9). Next, Jesus tells the twelve American disciples that they are to be a light to these American Israelites "who are a remnant of the house of Joseph" (15:12), that America is to be the land of their inheritance (v. 13) and that their Jewish brothers at Jerusalem do not know of their existence (v. 14).

Furthermore, Jesus declares that he has not made known to the Jews in the Holy Land the existence of "the other tribes of the house of Israel, whom the Father hath led away out of the land" of Palestine (v. 15). Thus all ten tribes, including the segment descended from Joseph through Manasseh and Lehi (the original leader of the American colony, Alma 10:3), are depicted as completely lost and unknown to the Jews of Jesus' day.

At this point the Gospel of John provided another fruitful source for the words and prayers that are written in Third Nephi. Jesus is represented as uttering words found in John's Gospel:

That other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd (15:17; also 15:21; compare with John 10:16).

The Third Nephi passage depends upon the King James Version of John. Third Nephi proceeds to give its own unique explanation of what Jesus meant by "other sheep," namely the Nephites and the lost tribes. It has Jesus saying that he hinted of the continued existence of this lost group of Israelites by telling the Jews in Palestine that he had "other sheep ... which are not of this fold," but the Jews thought he meant the Gentiles (vv. 21-22). However, he explains that the Gentiles will never personally "hear my voice" but will learn of Christ only "by the Holy Ghost" (v. 23). Rather than referring to the Israelites of America, this verse does not refer to any specific group other than non-Jews or Gentiles.

In the next chapter (chapter 16), Jesus adds that he is leaving to visit these "other sheep, which are not of this land [America], neither of the land of Jerusalem" so they may hear his voice, be numbered among his sheep and thus produce "one fold and one shepherd" (vv. 1-3). These American Israelites are told that they are to record this information Jesus has shared with them just in case the Jews fail to inquire by the Holy Ghost about their existence and the existence of "the other tribes whom they know not of" (v. 4).

The knowledge given here is supposedly important since the Gentiles will later use it to reach the remnant of the American Hebrews who have been scattered over the continent because of their unbelief. Through this effort and knowledge, they may "be brought in, or may be brought to a knowledge of me, their Redeemer" (v. 4). However, the Gentiles themselves should beware, or they will face rejection by God after they have scattered and mistreated these descendants of Israel so they have "become a hiss and a byword among them." If they fall into all kinds of sins and reject "the fulness of my gospel" (contained in the Book of Mormon), then the Lord will take that fulness from them and bring it to the house of Israel (Native Americans) and the Gentiles will no longer have power over them (vv. 6-12). However, if the Gentiles repent, they will be numbered among the house of Israel. But if they remain stubborn, then the Native Americans

will "tread them down," for "this land" (America) is divinely marked to be the inheritance of these sons of Israel (verses 13-16).

After expounding this unique eschatological interpretation of John 10:16, Jesus's discourse continues to incorporate phrases from John's Gospel. In chapter 17, Jesus declares that he would "go unto the Father" (compare John 14:28) and also show himself "unto the lost tribes of Israel" (v. 4). The multitude "did look steadfastly upon him as if they would ask him to tarry a little longer with them" (v. 5). Then "the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him" (v. 9). They did "bow down at his feet, and did worship him [Jesus]; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears" (v. 10). Their little children were brought to Jesus, reported Third Nephi, and "Jesus groaned within himself" (v. 14; compare John 11:33) and prayed great and marvelous things. Then he beheld the multitude and said: "Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full" (v. 20) then "he wept" (v. 21; compare John 11:35). Jesus next "took their little children, one by one, and blessed them" (v. 21) and prayed for them (see also Matt. 19:13-15; Mark 10:13-16, and Luke 18:15-17).

The disciples in chapter 18 were then commanded to bring the sacramental bread and wine to be blessed. For the bread, Jesus is reported to have said: "This shall ye do in remembrance of my body, which I have shown unto you" (v. 7) and for the wine, "ye shall do it in remembrance of my blood, which I have shed for you" (v. 11; compare Luke 22:19-20; Matt. 26:26-28; Mark 14:22-24, and 1 Cor. 11:23-26). Third Nephi then continues by presenting Jesus as uttering the following words:

And if ye shall always do these things blessed are ye, for ye are built upon my rock. But whoso among you shall do more or less than these are not built upon my rock, but are built upon a sandy foundation; and when the rain descends, and the floods come, and the winds blow, and beat upon them, they shall fall, and the gates of hell are ready open to receive them (vv. 12-13; compare Matt. 7:24-27; Luke 6:47-49; Matt. 16:18).

According to Third Nephi, Jesus reportedly said concerning prayer: "Ye must watch and pray always lest ye enter into temptation; for Satan desireth to have you, that he may sift you as wheat" (v. 18; compare Luke 22:31). To the disciples he further is reported to have said that they should "not suffer any one knowingly to partake of my flesh and blood unworthily, when ye shall minister it" (v. 28). Jesus here is basically following the instructions which Paul some twenty years later would issue in his first Epistle to the Corinthians:

Wherefore whosoever shall eat this bread, and drink this cup of the Lord, unworthily, shall be guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. But let a man examine himself, and so let him eat of that bread, and drink of that cup. For he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body (1 Cor. 11:27-29; compare 3 Ne. 18:28-29).

After further instructions, Jesus "touched with his hand the disciples whom he had chosen, one by one" (v. 36) and gave them power to give the Holy Ghost (v. 37).

Chapter 19 of Third Nephi explains that Jesus ascended into heaven after His supposed first visit. Echoing the appointment of the twelve apostles in Palestine, the names of the twelve Nephite disciples are recorded in the Book of Mormon in the following manner:

And it came to pass that on the morrow, when the multitude was gathered together, behold, Nephi and his brother whom he had raised from the dead, whose name was Timothy, and also his son, whose name was Jonas, and also Mathoni, and Mathonihah, his brother, and Kumen, and Kumenonhi, and Jeremiah, and Shemnon, and Jonas, and Zedekiah, and Isaiah—now these were the names of the disciples whom Jesus had chosen (19:4)

The twelve disciples of Third Nephi, like the New Testament twelve apostles, were listed with two sets of brothers and with two disciples that have the same name, e.g., in Third Nephi, "Jonas" (see Matt. 10:2-4; Mark 3:16-19; Luke 6:13-16, and Acts 1:13).

Nephi, one of the twelve disciples, then "went down into the water and was baptized. And he came up out of the water and began to baptize. And he baptized all those whom Jesus had chosen" (vv. 11-12). This, and other passages emphasizing immersion as the proper mode of baptism, seems to assume the existence of some conflicting mode such as pouring or sprinkling. The Nephite doctrinal disputes thus resemble those in Joseph Smith's day.

On Jesus's second visit, the multitude knelt down and the disciples "did pray unto Jesus, calling him their Lord and their God" (19:18; compare John 20:28). Jesus departed and went to pray by himself. The prayer recorded is very similar to the high-priestly prayer of Jesus in the Holy Land, recorded only in the Gospel of John. Compare the prayer in Third Nephi (19:20, 23, 28-29) and the one written in John's Gospel (17:1, 6, 9-10, 20-21). Even the ending is identical with the words written by John: "*And when Jesus had spoken these words*" (19:30, emphasis added)—"*When Jesus had spoken these words*" (John 18:1).

These prayers of Jesus in Third Nephi seem clearly to be based upon the Gospel of John. The Jesus presented in Third Nephi is not unique to the Third Nephi text but is taken right out of the New Testament, even down to borrowing the gospel writers' words and phrases. This use of John evidences still another example of textual borrowing in the Third Nephi account.

Chapter 20 of Third Nephi relates that Jesus gave all those assembled to hear him both bread and wine, but "there had been no bread, neither wine, brought by the disciples, neither by the multitude" (v. 6), a story that seems close to that of the feeding of the five thousand when there was a need for the sharing of food (Matt. 14:14-21; Mark 6:34-44; Luke 9:11-17, and John 6:5-14). That this is sacramental bread and wine is indicated in verse 8.

It is explained, as Jesus's discourse continues in chapter 21, that the Gentiles shall assist the Native Americans ("the remnant of Jacob") and any other Israelites that might be willing to join in ("as many of the house of Israel as shall come") to "build a city, which shall be called the New Jerusalem" (21:23) These Gentiles will also assist Native Americans scattered across the face of the land in coming to this "New Jerusalem" (v. 24). Then the power of heaven and Jesus himself will come down among them (v. 25). Earlier, the land of America itself was to be "a New Jerusalem" (20:22), but it was now to be a specific city. Third Nephi, however, had this New Jerusalem not "coming down from God out of the heaven" as predicted in the book of

Revelation (Rev. 21:2; see also Rev. 3:12), but simply that "the power of heaven come down" and Jesus promises to "be in the midst" (3 Ne. 21:25).

In chapter 23 Jesus adds to the Nephite record textual material from the New Testament about the graves opening at the time of Christ's resurrection—material that is otherwise found only in the Gospel according to Matthew. These words were reported to have been spoken years earlier by an American prophet named Samuel as a prediction of what would happen at the time of Christ's death. This resurrection event is supposed to have taken place in America, but it is like what is recorded in Matthew, even to the wording used (compare Hel. 14:25; 3 Ne. 23:9, 11 with Matt. 27:52-53).

As Jesus continued his discourse, other New Testament phrases appear. Reflecting Peter's words, Third Nephi related that Jesus "did expound all things ... yea, even all things which should come upon the face of the earth, even until the *elements* should *melt with fervent heat*" (26:3, emphasis added; compare 2 Pet. 3:10, 12). In a paraphrase of John 5:29 the writer has Jesus saying: "If they be good, to the resurrection of everlasting life; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of damnation" (26:5; see also Mosiah 16:11 and Hel. 12:26).

Like the New Testament words of Jesus, the Third Nephi multitude even saw that their children "yea, even babes did open their mouths and utter marvelous things" (26:16; compare Matt. 11:25; Luke 10:21). Furthermore, the response to Jesus' discourse was impressive, for many were baptized and "they who were baptized in the name of Jesus were called the church of Christ" (v. 21).

During the third visit of Jesus in Third Nephi, the record claims that Christ came to settle a dispute among the people concerning the name of the church.

Verily, verily, I say unto you, why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing? Have they not read the scriptures, which say ye must take upon you the name of Christ, which is my name? For by this name shall ye be called at the last day; And whoso taketh upon him my name, and endureth to the end, the same shall be saved at the last day. Therefore, whatsoever ye shall do, ye shall do it in my name; therefore ye shall call the church in my name (27:4-7)

This concern regarding the proper name of the church was an issue during the 1820s. This may have influenced its inclusion as words Christ would have said.

The remainder of Jesus's discourse during his third visit reflects the same dependence upon the language and thought of the New Testament. Jesus taught that he "had been lifted up upon the cross, that I might draw all men unto me" (27:14; compare John 12:32). After assuring them that "whatsoever things ye shall ask the Father in my name shall be given unto you" (v. 28; compare John 15:16), Jesus then exhorts them, drawing ideas and wording from Matthew chapter 7 (compare 3 Ne. 27:29 with Matt. 7:7-8 [identical wording also in Luke 11:9-10] and 27:33 with Matt. 7:13-14).

Jesus finally asked the twelve disciples, "What is it that ye desire of me, after that I am gone to the Father?" (28:1; compare John 21:20-23). Nine of the American disciples desired that they live "unto the age of man" (v. 2) and Jesus said to them "after that ye are seventy and two years old ye shall come unto me in my kingdom" (v. 3). To the remaining three disciples he said, borrowing language from 1 Corinthians:

Behold, I know your thoughts, and ye have desired the thing which John, my beloved, who was with me in my ministry, before that I was lifted up by the Jews, desired of me. Therefore, more blessed are ye, for ye shall never taste of death . . . but when I shall come in my glory ye shall be changed in the twinkling of an eye from mortality to immortality (vv. 6-8; compare 1 Cor. 15:51-53).

The three disciples were to "bring the souls of men unto" Jesus "while the world shall stand" (v. 9). Then Jesus "touched every one of them with his finger save it were the three who were to tarry, and then he departed" from his third and final visit among the American Israelites (v. 12). Third Nephi records the following regarding the three disciples who were to tarry on the earth:

Behold, I was about to write the names of those who were never to taste of death, but the Lord forbade; therefore I write them not, for they are hid from the world (28:25).⁴²¹

And they are as the angels of God, and if they shall pray unto the Father in the name of Jesus they can show themselves unto whatsoever man it seemeth them good (28:30).⁴²²

The clear conclusion of this examination is that the King James Version of the New Testament text was used extensively in the composition of Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon. The Sermon on the Mount given by Jesus during his ministry in the Old World was used to flesh out the idea that Christ had appeared to the ancient inhabitants of America. Other teachings of Jesus were adapted from different texts in the New Testament to provide content for an appearance of Jesus during the three-day period that Third Nephi claims for the visitation of the resurrected Jesus.

This documentation of extensive textual borrowing from the New Testament writings indicates a serious problem in accepting Third Nephi as an accurate account. If Jesus appeared in the New World as the Book of Mormon would have us believe, then the textual problems it contains would lead to the conclusion that it is not an accurate record of that event.

⁴²¹ Oliver B. Huntington recorded the names of those three Nephites in his journal: "February 16—1895 I am willing to state that the names of the 3 Nephites who do not sleep in the earth are Jeremiah, Zedekiah and Kumenonhi." Oliver B. Huntington Journal, Book 17:173, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁴²² This later led to an extensive body of Mormon folklore about the sighting of these three immortal messengers in various Mormon communities. See Hector Lee, *The Three Nephites: The Substance and Significance of the Legend in Folklore* (New York: Arno Press, 1977) and William A. Wilson, "Freeways, Parking Lots, and Ice Cream Stands: The Three Nephites in Contemporary Society," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21 (Autumn 1988):13-26.

Literary Dependence on Nineteenth Century Events

Once one sees how the Book of Mormon draws on the King James Bible, it is not difficult to detect other contemporary material. For example, the Book of Mormon is clearly familiar with American history, particularly events that had occurred prior to 1830 such as the voyage of Columbus and the European settling of America. Anachronisms are present in the text, since for example the Revolutionary War had already occurred prior to the dictation of the Book of Mormon text. First Nephi 13 is represented as containing a prophetic vision of events in American history. Known historical happenings from the past are written as prophecy to make it appear that they were known in vision two thousand years earlier. This is evident from the following extracts, with interpretation in brackets:⁴²³

I looked and beheld many waters [Atlantic Ocean]; and they divided the Gentiles [in Europe] from the seed of my brethren [Native Americans]. (1 Ne. 13:10)

And I looked and beheld a man [Columbus] among the Gentiles [in Europe] . . . and he went forth upon the many waters [Atlantic Ocean], even to the seed of my brethren [Native Americans], who were in the promised land [America]. (1 Ne. 13:12)

And it came to pass that I beheld the Spirit of God, that it wrought upon other Gentiles [Pilgrim fathers]; and they went forth out of captivity, upon the many waters [Atlantic Ocean]. . . . I beheld many multitudes of the Gentiles [Pilgrim fathers] upon the land of promise [America]; and I beheld the wrath of God, that it was upon the seed of my brethren [the Indians (Native Americans)]; and they were scattered before the Gentiles and were smitten [judgment on Native Americans]. . . . And I beheld their mother Gentiles [the British] were gathered together upon the waters, and upon the land also, to battle against them [Thirteen Colonies] . . . the wrath of God was upon all those that were gathered together against them to battle [the Revolutionary War, 1776-1781]. (1 Ne. 13:13-14, 17-18)

the Gentiles [the United States] that had gone out of captivity were delivered by the power of God out of the hands of all other nations [probably the War of 1812]. (1 Ne. 13:19)

The Book of Mormon also refers to the Bible being brought to America:

I beheld a book [Bible], and it was carried forth among them [Native Americans]. (1 Ne. 13:20)

⁴²³ Some of these identifications are contained in the footnotes of the 1879 Salt Lake edition of the Book of Mormon. Orson Pratt, apostle and official LDS church historian, prepared the references for that edition.

Neither will he suffer that the Gentiles [United States] shall destroy the seed of thy brethren [the Indians (Native Americans)]. (1 Ne. 13:31)

And it came to pass that I beheld the remnant of the seed of my brethren, and also the book of the Lamb of God, which had proceeded forth from the mouth of the Jew, that it came forth from the Gentiles unto the remnant of the seed of my brethren [bringing the Bible and doing missionary work among Native Americans⁴²⁴]. (1 Ne. 13:38)

The Book of Mormon's religious and historical setting takes place not in the Old World but in the New and reflects the popular pride that most citizens of the day felt for their new nation.⁴²⁵ The following are some major themes relating to the place of America as developed in the Book of Mormon making the book unique.

A Choice Land

that after the waters had receded from off the face of this land it became a choice land above all other lands, a chosen land of the Lord. (Ether 13:2)

we have obtained a land of promise, a land which is choice above all other lands. (2 Ne. 1:5)

Hid from Knowledge of Other Nations

And behold, it is wisdom that this land should be kept as yet from the knowledge of other nations; for behold, many nations would overrun the land, that there would be no place for an inheritance. (2 Ne. 1:8)

A Land of Promise

be led to a land of promise; yea, even a land which I have prepared for you; yea, a land which is choice above all other lands. (1 Ne. 2:20)

Land of Liberty

he named all the land which was south of the land Desolation, yea, and in fine, all the land, both on the north and on the south—A chosen land, and the land of liberty. (Alma 46:17)

⁴²⁴ In 1663 the Bible was printed in the Algonquin Indian language in Massachusetts. It had been translated into their language by John Eliot. The first English New Testament was published in America in 1777 and the Holy Bible in 1782.

⁴²⁵ Hans Kohn, *The Idea of Nationalism* (New York: Collier Books, 1969), 269-70.

Free from Bondage

Behold, this is a choice land, and whatsoever nation shall possess it shall be free from bondage, and from captivity, and from all other nations under heaven. (Ether 2:12)

No Kings on the Land

And this land shall be a land of liberty unto the Gentiles, and there shall be no kings upon the land, who shall raise up unto the Gentiles. (2 Ne. 10:11)

America Is Zion

And I will fortify this land against all other nations. And he that fighteth against Zion shall perish, saith God. (2 Ne. 10:12-13)

And all the nations that fight against Zion, and that distress her, shall be as a dream of a night vision . . . even so shall the multitude of all nations be that fight against Mount Zion. (2 Ne. 27:3)

Visits of Christ to America after His Crucifixion

3 Nephi 11-28 (three days)

New Jerusalem to Be Built in America

And that it was the place of the New Jerusalem, which should come down out of heaven, and the holy sanctuary of the Lord. . . . And that a New Jerusalem should be built upon this land, unto the remnant of the seed of Joseph, for which things there has been a type. (Ether 13:3, 6)

The third decade of the nineteenth century when the Book of Mormon appeared was also a period of theological controversy. The book takes sides on various issues under discussion, as the following extracts demonstrate. The Book of Mormon's position is quoted and a contemporary adherent of the same point of view is given:

Baptism by Immersion

On this wise shall ye baptize; and there shall be no disputations among you. . . . Behold, ye shall go down and stand in the water, and in my name shall ye baptize them. . . . And then shall ye immerse them in the water, and come forth again out of the water. . . . And according as I have commanded you thus shall ye baptize. And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been. (3 Ne. 11:22, 23, 26, 28)

We baptize by immersion, because we think from all the evidence we can obtain upon this subject, it was the way or mode by which the ordinance was administered when first administered when first instituted, and afterwards practiced by the ancient christians. (David Millard, ed., *Gospel Luminary* 1 [October 1825]:221, West Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York)

But I am now to show that *christian immersion*, as instituted by Jesus Christ, (not as corrupted by men,) is the gospel in *water*. (*The Christian Baptist*, 1955 reprint; 5 [Feb. 5, 1828]:165, Bethany, Virginia, emphasis retained)

Name of the Church

And they who were baptized in the name of Jesus were called the church of Christ. . . . And they said unto him: Lord, we will that thou wouldst tell us the name whereby we shall call this church; for there are disputations among the people concerning this matter. And the Lord said unto them: Verily, verily, I say unto you, why is it that the people should murmur and dispute because of this thing? . . . [Y]e must take upon you the name of Christ . . . [T]herefore ye shall call the church in my name . . . And how be it my church save it be called in my name? For if a church be called in Moses' name then it be Moses' church; or if it be called in the name of a man then it be the church of a man; but if it be called in my name then it is my church, if it so be that they are built upon my gospel. (3 Ne. 26:21; 27:3-5, 7-8)

When we give a *name* and a *creed* to a church, other than the name of *Christ*, or *Christian*, and *the New Testament*, or *the Gospel*, that church acquires in our *imagination*s and *feelings*, and in *fact*, a character altogether different from what the *Church of Christ* really possesses in the light of the New Testament. (*The Christian Baptist* 2 [July 4, 1825]:237, emphasis retained)

We, however, choose to be known by the name of Christian to the exclusion of all other names not found in the scriptures, this bring the most significant appellation of the followers of Christ, and agreeably to our views, given by divine appointment. (*Gospel Luminary* 3 [August 1827]:188, West Bloomfield, Ontario County, New York)

Baptism of Children

. . . for it grieveth me that there should disputations rise among you. For, if I have learned the truth, there have been disputations among you concerning the baptism of your little children I know that it is solemn mockery before God, that ye should baptize little children. . . . For awful is the wickedness to suppose that God saveth one child because of baptism, and the other must perish because he hath no baptism. (Moro. 8:4-5, 9, 15)

The question of *infant baptism* is now generally discussed all over the land, and immense has been the result. (*The Christian Baptist* 5 [January 7, 1828]:138, emphasis retained)

Freemasonry: A Topic of Discussion

The abduction and probable murder of William Morgan in September 1826 caused many Americans to view Freemasonry as a dangerous threat. George Washington's warning about "all combinations and associations" in his Farewell Address became the anti-Masonic motto, "Beware of Secret Combinations." Masons were regarded as shedding innocent blood, binding themselves with oaths, and bent on preventing just punishment from coming upon a fellow Mason. Whether this violent reaction to Masonry was justified, the controversy is reflected in the Book of Mormon.

According to the Book of Mormon, at the time the book was to appear there would be "secret combinations." The words "secret combinations" did not always refer to Masons. But the following quotations, from the many that are in the Book of Mormon, illustrate this unmistakable anti-Masonic influence.

Secret Combinations

And it shall come in a day when the blood of saints shall cry unto the Lord, because of secret combinations and the works of darkness. (Morm. 8:27)

"BEWARE OF SECRET COMBINATIONS." These are the dying words of General George Washington. . . . Do not these words . . . point with an index that cannot be mistaken, to the Society of Freemasons? (*The Morgan Investigator* 1 [March 29, 1827]:1, Batavia, New York)

Masonic Rites

And there are also secret combinations, even as in times of old, according to the combinations of the devil, for he is the founder of all these things; yea, the founder of murder, and works of darkness; yea, and he leadeth them by the neck with a flaxen cord, until he bindeth them with his strong cords forever. (2 Ne. 26:22)

The candidate is then blindfolded, his left foot bare, his right in a slipper, his left breast and arm naked, and a rope called a Cable-tow round his neck . . . (William Morgan, *Illustrations of Masonry by One of the Fraternity Who Has Devoted Thirty Years to the Subject* [Batavia, New York: Printed for the Author, 1826], 18)

I fancy those men are fastening a "Cable Tow" about their necks, which will have a more uncomfortable set than those they have worn in the lodge and which they

will in all probability wear to their graves. (*The Morgan Investigator* 1 [March 29, 1827]:2).

The principles of masonry are confessedly ancient. They can be traced back to the time when the first deceiver said, "Ye shall not surely die, for God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, ye shall be as God's knowing good and evil." . . . Freemasonry, without controversy, is the very master-piece of pandemonium. By means of these hidden mysteries, Satan has strangely outdone himself. (*Republican Monitor* 6 [November 23, 1828]:1, Cazenovia, New York)

Secret Signs and Words

And it came to pass that they did have their signs, yea, their secret signs, and their secret words; and this that they might distinguish a brother who had entered into the covenant, that whatsoever wickedness his brother should do he should not be injured by his brother, nor by those who did belong to his band, who had taken this covenant. (Hel. 6:22)

As the signs, due-guards, grips, words, pass-words, and their several names comprise pretty much all the secrets of Masonry. (William Morgan, *Illustrations of Masonry*, 55)

. . . to protect their brethren from the lash of the civil laws . . . whether guilty or not guilty, treason and murder not excepted; and although they may be obliged to swear falsely to clear the guilty brother, they must do it, or incur the penalty of secret death. (William W. Phelps, ed., *The Ontario Phoenix* 1 [September 17, 1828]:2, Canandaigua, New York)

Masonic oaths were intended to screen criminal masons and enable them to elude public justice. The expectations of escaping the strong arm of the law, emboldens them to the commission of the most daring deeds of iniquity. The life of every Freemason is awfully pledged in defence of the brotherhood and the mysteries of the order. Hence it is extremely difficult to bring criminal masons to justice. (*Republican Monitor* 6 [November 23, 1828]:1)

Contrary to the Laws of God and Country

And thus they might murder, and plunder, and steal, and commit whoredoms and all manner of wickedness, contrary to the laws of their country and also the laws of their God. (Hel. 6:23)

Masonry is a murderous institution. It is based on laws which require murder. Those laws which support the system, demand and take the life of a fellow creature, without any reference to the laws of God or the land. . . . Who then does not see, that the very principles, spirit, and essence, of this ancient fraternity, are

murderous! (John G. Stearns, *An Inquiry into the Nature and Tendency of Speculative Free-Masonry*, 1829 ed., 76)

. . . that dark and treasonable plot, formed against the lives of our citizens and the laws of our country. (*The Morgan Investigator* 1 [March 29, 1827]:2)

Native Americans of Hebrew Origin

The Book of Mormon asserts that Native Americans are of Hebrew descent, specifically from one of the lost tribes (Joseph), and uses the Old Testament to support this.⁴²⁶ However, the idea that the American Indians were descendants of the Hebrews was a common one in early America before the Book of Mormon was published.

Since the discovery of America, many people had published various theories about the origins of the native Indians. The idea that their ancestors were of Hebrew origin was widely published in both Europe and America. This theory was not universally held, but it was popular among religious leaders. The following works were among the most popular expressing the Hebrew origin of the Indians at the period before the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1830:

Thomas Thorowgood. *Jews in America, or, Probabilities that the Americans are of that Race*. London, 1650.

James Adair. *The History of the American Indians*. London, 1775.

Charles Crawford. *An Essay upon the Propagation of the Gospel, in which there are facts to prove that many of the Indians in America are descended from the Ten Tribes*. Philadelphia, PA, 1799.

Elias Boudinot. *A Star in the West; or, a Humble Attempt to Discover the Long Lost Tribes of Israel*. Trenton, NJ: Published by D. Fenton, S. Hutchinson, and J. Dunham, 1816.

⁴²⁶ Those scholars who have studied the Solomon Spalding manuscript have noticed similarities in style and wording on some religious issues and sections relating to wars in that manuscript and in the Book of Mormon. See Vernal Holley, *Book of Mormon Authorship: A Closer Look* 2nd ed. (Roy, Utah: author, 1989), which utilizes this material. Though of a different nature, Ethan Smith's *View of the Hebrews* includes topics that occur in the Book of Mormon. We should not be surprised that similar ideas are contained in a written document produced about the same time. At the time these writings were recorded it was widely believed that Indians were of the stock of Israel. Over the years we have learned that there is no solid evidence of Hebrew origin of Native Americans. The writings of B. H. Roberts are included in Brigham D. Madsen, ed., *Studies of the Book of Mormon* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985). See also David Persuitte, *Joseph Smith and the Origins of The Book of Mormon* 2nd ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland & Company, 2000).

Ethan Smith. *View of the Hebrews*. Poultney, VT: Printed and Published by Smith & Shute, 1823.

_____. *View of the Hebrews; or, the Tribes of Israel in America*, 2nd ed. Poultney, VT: Published and Printed by Smith & Shute, 1825, 2d ed.

Josiah Priest. *The Wonders of Nature and Providence Displayed*. Albany, NY, 1825.

Some writers argued that Native Americans descended from the ten lost tribes of Israel because of similarities between customs and languages. Others saw Christian ideas among the American Indians and believed that Christianity had been taught to them since the first century of the Christian era.⁴²⁷ The idea was so important that writers of that period published lengthy books on the topic. Indeed, it was one of the most popular views at the time the Book of Mormon came off the press.⁴²⁸

Events in life of Joseph Smith

Joseph Smith wrote the following about his youth: "by searching the scriptures I found that <mankind> did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and living faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament."⁴²⁹ This view finds expression in the Book of Mormon.

And the Gentiles are lifted up in the pride of their eyes, and have stumbled, because of the greatness of their stumbling block, that they have built up many churches; nevertheless, they put down the power and miracles of God, and preach up unto themselves their own wisdom and their own learning, that they may get gain and grind upon the face of the poor. And there are many churches built up which cause envyings, and strifes, and malice. (2 Ne. 26:20-21)

For it shall come to pass in that day that the churches which are built up, and not unto the Lord, when the one shall say unto the other: Behold, I, I am the Lord's; and the others shall say: I, I am the Lord's; and thus shall every one say that hath built up churches, and not unto the Lord—And they shall contend one with another; and their priests shall contend one with another, and they shall teach with

⁴²⁷ In 1816 Elias Boudinot claimed that the ancestors of the Native Americans had at least part of the Bible, "that the book which the white people have was once theirs." Elias Boudinot, *A Star in the West*, 110. In this same year Boudinot founded the American Bible Society.

⁴²⁸ On books published prior to 1830 on the origin of Native Americans, see George Weiner, "America's Jewish Braves," *Mankind* 4 (October 1974):56-64; David A. Palmer, "A Survey of Pre-1830 Historical Sources Relating to the Book of Mormon," *Brigham Young University Studies* 17 (Autumn 1976):101-7; and Dan Vogel, *Indian Origins and the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986).

⁴²⁹ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:5. See Gordon S. Wood, "Evangelical America and Early Mormonism," *New York History* 61 (October 1980):359-86.

their learning, and deny the Holy Ghost, which giveth utterance. . . . Yea, they have all gone out of the way; they have become corrupted. Because of pride, and because of false teachers, and false doctrine, their churches have become corrupted, and their churches are lifted up; because of pride they are puffed up. (2 Ne. 28:3-4, 11-12)

Joseph Smith was personally familiar with such religious controversies from his own active participation in his youth. His early history mentions his quest for religious knowledge and "my intimate acquaintance with those different denominations."⁴³⁰

Also Joseph Smith believed in, and was a leading participant in, treasure seeking. His examination before Justice Albert Neely showed that this activity had been part of his early development in life. Jonathan Thompson testified in 1826 that Smith helped find a trunk full of treasure, but it kept "settling away" and they never could get it: "the board which he struck his spade upon was probably the chest, but on account of an enchantment the trunk kept settling away from under them while digging; that notwithstanding they continued constantly removing the dirt, yet the trunk kept about the same distance from them."⁴³¹ This idea of treasures slipping into the earth is reflected in the Book of Mormon.

Whoso shall hide up treasures in the earth shall find them again no more, because of the great curse of the land, save he be a righteous man and shall hide it up unto the Lord. For I will, saith the Lord, that they shall hide up their treasures unto me; and cursed be they who hide not up their treasures unto me; for none hideth up their treasures unto me save it be the righteous. (Hel. 13:18-19)

And behold, the time cometh that he curseth your riches, that they become slippery, that ye cannot hold them; and in the days of your poverty ye cannot retain them. . . . Yea, we have hid up our treasures and they have slipped away from us, because of the curse of the land. O that we had repented in the day that the word of the Lord came unto us; for behold the land is cursed, and all things are become slippery, and we cannot hold them. Behold, we are surrounded by demons, yea, we are encircled about by the angels of him who hath sought to destroy our souls. (Hel. 13:31, 35-37)

The inhabitants thereof began to hide up their treasures in the earth; and they became slippery, because the Lord had cursed the land, that they could not hold them, nor retain them again. (Morm. 1:18)

Not only is Joseph Smith's treasure digging reflected in the Book of Mormon, but other events in which Joseph was involved show up there, after the events had already taken place. As discussed in Chapter 7, Martin Harris reportedly told Joseph Smith about his visit to Charles

⁴³⁰ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:5.

⁴³¹ Charles Marshall, "The Original Prophet. By a Visitor to Salt Lake City," *Fraser's Magazine* 7 (February 1873):230. According to the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith was instructed to hide up the book unto the Lord (2 Ne. 27:22, 30:3-5).

Anthon of New York City. This trip occurred about February 1828. In the Book of Mormon, this incident is mentioned but some of its features are different. 2 Nephi 27:15-20 contains an expanded commentary on Isaiah 29:11-12 in relation to this specific event:

But behold, it shall come to pass that the Lord God shall say unto him to whom he shall deliver the book: Take these words which are not sealed and deliver them to another, that he may show them unto the learned, saying: Read this, I pray thee. And the learned shall say: Bring hither the book, and I will read them. . . . And the man shall say: I cannot bring the book, for it is sealed. Then shall the learned say: I cannot read it. Wherefore it shall come to pass, that the Lord God will deliver again the book and the words thereof to him that is not learned; and the man that is not learned shall say: I am not learned. (2 Ne. 27:15, 17-19)

These changes in Isaiah 29 prophesy of an event that had already occurred to Martin Harris. There is no ancient text of Isaiah, either Hebrew (including the Dead Sea Scrolls) or in any ancient translation that supports Joseph Smith's changes that make the passage fit the incident that occurred early in 1828.⁴³² The above example shows Martin Harris's adventure being described in prophecy and being included in the Book of Mormon text. Professor Anthon wrote that he did not promise "to decipher the piece of writing in question—if the original records were brought to me."⁴³³

In March 1829, while working on the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith stated that there would be three special witnesses to the book. In a revelation for Joseph and Martin Harris received in Harmony, Pennsylvania, Smith was told:

This Generation they shall have my word yea & the testimony of three of my servants shall go forth with my word unto this Generation yea three shall know of a surety that those things are true for I will give them power that they may Behold & view those things as they are & to none else will I grant this power among this Generation & the testimony of three Witnesses will I send forth.⁴³⁴

When Joseph Smith recommenced his dictation, he included in the text references to three witnesses who would testify of the Book of Mormon.

⁴³² For an examination of Isaiah 29 in the Book of Mormon, see Wesley P. Walters, *The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1990), 75-88. For a study on the use of Ezekiel 37, see Brian E. Keck, "Ezekiel 37, Sticks, and Babylonian Writing Boards: A Critical Reappraisal," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 23 (Spring 1990):126-38.

⁴³³ Anthon to "Rev. and Dear Sir," August 12, 1844, in *New-York Observer* 23 (May 3, 1845):69, New York.

⁴³⁴ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 27-28; BC 4:4; LDS D&C 5:11-15; RLDS D&C 5:3. Joseph Smith was further instructed, "When thou hast translated a few more pages, thou shalt stop for a season, even until I command thee again: then thou mayest translate again."

Wherefore, at that day when the book shall be delivered unto the man of whom I have spoken, the book shall be hid from the eyes of the world, that the eyes of none shall behold it save it be that three witnesses shall behold it, by the power of God, besides him to whom the book shall be delivered; and they shall testify to the truth of the book and the things therein. And there is none other which shall view it, save it be a few according to the will of God. (2 Ne. 27:12-13)

In one place instructions in the text inform him that he may "show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work."

And behold, ye may be privileged that ye may show the plates unto those who shall assist to bring forth this work; And unto three shall they be shown by the power of God; wherefore they shall know of a surety that these things are true. And in the mouth of three witnesses shall these things be established; and the testimony of three, and this work, in the which shall be shown forth the power of God and also his word, of which the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost bear record—and all this shall stand as a testimony against the world at the last day. (Ether 5:2-4)

The three witnesses chosen to view the gold plates were Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, and Martin Harris. Cowdery had seen the plates in a vision before meeting Joseph Smith.⁴³⁵ In June 1829 they were told that by faith they would see them, even as Joseph Smith had seen them.⁴³⁶ The testimony of the three witnesses, as published in the Book of Mormon, said that they saw an angel and engravings on the plates.

Martin Harris, the oldest witness, emphasized that his experience of seeing the plates was through the eye of faith as the 1829 revelation stated. John H. Gilbert recorded: "Martin was in the office when I finished setting up the testimony of the three witnesses,—(Harris—Cowdery and Whitmer) I said to him,—'Martin, did you see those plates with your naked eyes?' Martin looked down for an instant, raised his eyes up, and said, 'No, I saw them with a spiritual eye.'"⁴³⁷

David Whitmer wrote, "Of course we were in the spirit when we had the view, for no man can behold the face of an angel, except in a spiritual view, but we were in the body also, and

⁴³⁵ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:10.

⁴³⁶ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 49; LDS D&C 17; RLDS D&C 15. This revelation, given previously to the three witnesses "having a view of the plates &c," was not included in the Book of Commandments but was published as section 42 in the 1835 D&C. The "Manuscript History of Joseph Smith" mentions the circumstances of two visions relating to the three witnesses viewing the plates. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 1:236-37, 295-97.

⁴³⁷ Memorandum of John H. Gilbert, September 8, 1892, introductory pages of *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, Vol. 1 (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press for Wilford C. Wood, 1958). In 1838 Martin Harris stated that he "never saw the plates with his natural eyes only in vision or imagination." Qtd. in Stephen Burnett, Letter to Lyman E. Johnson, April 15, 1838, Joseph Smith Letterbook 2:64, CHL.

everything was as natural to us, as it is at any time."⁴³⁸ Oliver Cowdery reportedly handled the plates, "I beheld with my eyes. And handled with my hands the gold plates from which it was translated."⁴³⁹

Besides the three witnesses, eight other witnesses said Joseph Smith showed them the plates. Their statement records that they handled and lifted the plates. John Whitmer, for instance, wrote, "I have most assuredly seen the plates from whence the book of Mormon is translated, and that I have handled these plates."⁴⁴⁰ Three years later he was reported as saying, "I handled those plates there was fine engravings on both sides. I handled them . . . they were shown to me by a supernatural power."⁴⁴¹ The testimonies of the witnesses to the Book of Mormon said that they saw an angel and viewed or handled the plates by faith.

The March 1829 revelation to Harris said of Joseph Smith, "He has a gift to translate the book, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift."⁴⁴² Smith's only gift was to translate the Book of Mormon. Like the previous examples, this restriction was made part of the Book of Mormon text:

And I will give unto him a commandment that he shall do none other work, save the work which I shall command him. And I will make him great in mine eyes; for he shall do my work. (2 Ne. 3:8)

Smith was to "do none other work" but produce the Book of Mormon. After the publication of the Book of Mormon, the young prophet commenced revising the Bible. This would be considered a gift going beyond his initial commandment.

Joseph Smith was named after his father and included his own name in the text of the Book of Mormon. In a prophecy attributed to the biblical Joseph, who was sold into Egypt, it reports that a choice seer would be called in the last days:

And thus prophesied Joseph, saying: Behold, that seer will the Lord bless; and they that seek to destroy him shall be confounded. . . . And his name shall be called after me [Joseph of Egypt]; and it shall be after the name of his father [Joseph Smith Sr.]. (2 Ne. 3:14-15)

Lucius Fenn of Covert, Seneca County, New York, wrote a letter in February 1830 and told what he had heard about the Book of Mormon and that its finder would be named Joseph. Fenn stated:

⁴³⁸ David Whitmer to Anthony Metcalf, April 2, 1887, in A. Metcalf, *Ten Years before the Mast* (Malad City, ID, 1888), 74; also in Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness* (Orem, Utah: Grandin Book, 1991), 247.

⁴³⁹ Reuben Miller, Journal, October 21, 1848, CHL.

⁴⁴⁰ *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 2 (March 1836):286-87, Kirtland, Ohio.

⁴⁴¹ Theodore Turley's memoranda, under date of April 4, 1839, handwriting of Thomas Bullock (1845), CHL; copied into Manuscript History Book C-1, 913, under date of April 5, 1839. See *History of the Church* 3:307.

⁴⁴² BC 4:2; LDS D&C 5:4; RLDS D&C 5:1. See Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 29-31, for commentary on this revelation.

[T]hey are a printing it in Palmyra it is expected that it <will> come out soon so that we can see it it speaks of the Millennium [sic] day and tells when it is going to take plaids and it tells that the man that is to find this bible his name as [is] Joseph and his father[']s name is Joseph.⁴⁴³

The story of the gold plates was the vehicle that Joseph Smith used as a minister to preach his new emphasis on Jesus. Smith taught that at one time he had in his possession an ancient record of peoples who lived on the American continent more than fifteen hundred years earlier. Believers had faith that Smith was able to recover a record or set of gold plates. The purpose of Smith's story was to make men and women believe as strongly as gold in his role as God's minister of salvation. Whether Smith had visions about the gold plates, whether he at one time had them in his possession, or whether anyone saw the physical plates was not important in what he was trying to accomplish. The message of the Book of Mormon, through the use of metal plates, was for others to believe in the Jesus who spoke to Native Americans and who was speaking at the time to Joseph Smith.

The Book of Mormon reflects events that had already occurred before the time of its publication, some of which Joseph Smith was directly involved in. Its stand on theological controversies of the 1820s made it appealing as a revelation illuminating the Bible.⁴⁴⁴ However, it also contains ideas on America, Masonry, the proper name of the Christian church, and events connected with Joseph Smith's life. These and other contemporary events and ideas prevalent at the time of its production are found in its pages.⁴⁴⁵ The Book of Mormon evidences a nineteenth-century origin and can be identified as an example of early American religious fiction.

One of the ideas relating to the text of the Book of Mormon is saying that it is impossible for Joseph Smith to have written the book since he was unlearned at the time. This is not an accurate assessment of the education of the young prophet. Learning in the Smith home included Bible reading in addition to family and individual prayer. Lucy Mack Smith was an important influence on her family as they conducted family worship. Joseph Sr. led the family in singing and prayer as the head of the household. His experience as a school teacher would help as he instructed especially the male children in transacting farm business.

⁴⁴³ Lucius Fenn to Birdseye Bronson, February 12, 1830, William Robertson Coe Collection of Western Americana, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, Connecticut. See William Mulder and A. Russell Mortensen, eds., *Among the Mormons: Historic Accounts by Contemporary Observers* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 28.

⁴⁴⁴ See Timothy L. Smith, "The Book of Mormon in a Biblical Culture," *Journal of Mormon History* 7 (1980):3-21; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1989), 113-22; and Alan Taylor, "The Free Seekers: Religious Culture in Upstate New York, 1790-1835," *Journal of Mormon History* 27 (Spring 2001):42-66.

⁴⁴⁵ For additional pre-1830 published and contemporary ideas that are a background to the religious thoughts of this period, see Rick Grunder, *Mormon Parallels* (Ithaca, NY: Rick Grunder Books, 1987). See also Rick Grunder, *Mormon Parallels: A Bibliographic Source* (LaFayette, NY: Rick Grunder Books, 2008). First edition issued in digital form only and limited to 400 copies on CD-ROM.

It should be remembered that Joseph Smith received additional schooling when he was twenty years old. The narratives in the Book of Mormon are based upon how religion was reportedly practiced in ancient America. What is taught in the record is an indication of how Smith as a religious seer perceived the way the ancestors of Native Americans preached and battled. With the KJV Bible as his standard source text, Joseph Smith projected his own religious beliefs into the Book of Mormon. This is an important clue to its authenticity as a nineteenth-century work. It is what would be expected in a new book.

The Bible was an influential book in American life when Joseph Smith commenced his work. Joseph's gift was to incorporate his theological understanding into the material he was writing. He did not need the plates of gold to produce the Book of Mormon. He used Isaiah and Matthew to supplement his writing about the origin of Native Americans ending with two battles of heretofore unknown civilizations in Manchester, Ontario County, New York.

The published Book of Mormon projected Smith into a world that was skeptical of strange ideas and newly founded religions. The majority of reviews about the Book of Mormon were negative. With religious freedom being one of the cornerstones of American democracy, individuals could believe a new book as history even though it is a fictional book. What became important was not the book itself but the belief that Joseph Smith was a modern seer and prophet.

Quorum of Apostles: Actions of Dissent at Kirtland⁴⁴⁶

Introduction

A June 1829 revelation proclaimed by Joseph Smith, before the formation of the church, told Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer about twelve individuals who would be “called to go forth into all the world to preach my [Christ’s] gospel unto every creature.” They were told to “search out the Twelve” who would be known “by their desires and their works.”⁴⁴⁷ It would take almost six years, but eventually these witnesses to the Book of Mormon, now including Martin Harris, completed their task at Kirtland, Ohio, when they selected twelve men to constitute the first Quorum of Twelve Apostles in February 1835. They chose men who were strong willed and had independent spirits as well as forceful speaking styles. Their common bond was their strong belief in the “restored gospel” and their proven abilities to share this belief with others. They willingly accepted their commitment to take on a lifetime missionary assignment.

Ranked oldest to youngest, they were Thomas B. Marsh, David W. Patten, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, William E. McLellin, Parley P. Pratt, Luke Johnson, William Smith, Orson Pratt, John F. Boynton, and Lyman E. Johnson. On the day they were selected, Joseph Smith announced that by inspiration from the Holy Spirit the Twelve would be chosen to “go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or the coming of the Lord.” The Second Coming was “nigh,” he said, and would be realized in little more than half a century. “Even fifty six years, should wind up the scene.” They accepted their appointments with humility and, motivated by the millennial fervor sweeping Kirtland, set out to do their part in preparing for the end times.⁴⁴⁸

This short article tells about obstacles they encountered that would try their faith and cause most to reconsider their blind obedience to Joseph Smith. The spiraling inflation, the unchartered Mormon bank, and the financial collapse that occurred in 1837 contributed to varying degrees of

⁴⁴⁶ First published in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 35 (Fall/Winter 2015) and based primarily on William Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt, *Lost Apostles: Forgotten Members of Mormonism’s Original Quorum of Twelve* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014), 134–60.

⁴⁴⁷ Doctrine and Covenants (2013 LDS edition, hereafter LDS D&C) 18:27–38; Doctrine and Covenants (1990 RLDS edition, hereafter RLDS D&C) 16:5–6.

⁴⁴⁸ Kirtland Council Minute Book, 147, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Church History Library, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church History Library); Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book* (Salt Lake City: Collier’s Publishing, 1996), 70. These minutes, also known as Minute Book 1, are available under Administrative Records on the Joseph Smith Papers web site at <http://josephsmithpapers.org/the-papers>.

dissent among the majority of the apostolic quorum. Some believed Smith was led astray as they questioned his church leadership and spiritual grounding. Some of the events that occurred at Kirtland, Ohio, are highlighted as they led to the abandonment of Kirtland as church headquarters. The interactions of members of the Quorum of Twelve are discussed in their historical context. They struggled along with others during a time when members were openly questioning the direction the church was taking.

The Latter Day Saint church leadership decided to create a bank to provide needed credit to the Kirtland economy. Since the neighboring communities that had banks were experiencing growth, it was assumed to be a necessary step toward the town's future. In November 1836 the articles of agreement were drafted for an institution called the Kirtland Safety Society Bank, a name that would soon prove to be ironic. But when the Ohio legislature rejected the bank's application for a charter in December, the founders added "Anti-Banking Company" to the name.

However, some of the citizens of Kirtland were wary of the bank. Lyman E. Johnson attended an organizational meeting in January 1837 but decided against investing; nor did John F. Boynton participate. Most of the Smith family did, but William Smith withheld funds, or at least his name was not included in the index of investors.⁴⁴⁹ John Johnson and son Luke enthusiastically contributed \$600 (about \$12,000 in today's currency) and \$47 respectively.⁴⁵⁰ As everyone would soon learn, it didn't necessarily matter who contributed and who did not because when a community's financial institution collapses, everyone suffers losses.

The Latter Day Saints were hardly alone in placing their faith in their "anti-bank." Without a national currency, it was common in the nineteenth century for nonbanking institutions to issue notes that served as the means of exchange. Paper money often bore the name of a mill or other institution emblazoned across the front. As historian Mark Staker wrote in his history of Ohio, "businesses of all kinds commonly lent money in the form of banknotes that they printed individually and which were used much like promissory notes.... These banknotes were backed by very small amounts of specie and large amounts of less liquid forms of capital such as land, grain, cotton, canals, industries, books, or even sandstone."⁴⁵¹ It is easy today to think of the notes issued by the Safety Society as currency, but they were really just I.O.U.s without collateral.

The growth of banks was partly the result of land speculation. In unsettled areas of the country, cash-poor pioneers wanted to purchase as much land as possible and borrowed money on credit to do so, with the land serving as collateral. As banks accommodated this demand, market forces pushed prices higher. Land speculators didn't mind paying higher prices because they could borrow the money they needed to make the purchase. The result was that everyone felt as though they were participating in a prosperous windfall, and no one imagined the bottom would fall out. But it did and about a third of the banks failed.

Some people lost everything. As banks tried to save themselves, they increased the problem by selling stock. As Mark Staker has explained, nineteenth-century banks did not

⁴⁴⁹ Marvin S. Hill, C. Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, "The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 4 (Summer 1977): 469.

⁴⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 466–68.

⁴⁵¹ Mark Lyman Staker, *Hearken, O Ye People: The Historical Setting of Joseph Smith's Ohio Revelations* (Salt Lake City: Greg Kofford Books, 2009), 447.

generate funds by inviting common people to invest in savings accounts. “Banks usually solicited only the affluent to invest as stockholders, and they shaped the price of their stock to exclude ordinary citizens.”⁴⁵² In Kirtland, with its more egalitarian milieu, people could purchase stock in installments. That proved to be a double-edged sword because the greater number of people who participated, the more who were susceptible to loss.

Heber C. Kimball recorded what he found when he returned from a mission in October 1836:

On our arrival in Kirtland we were much grieved to see the spirit of speculation that was prevailing in the church; trade and traffic seemed to engross the time and attention of the Saints: when we left Kirtland a City lot was worth about 150 dollars, but on our return to our astonishment the same lot was said to be worth from 500 to 1000 dollars according to location; and some men who when I left could hardly get food to eat, I found on my return to be men of supposed great wealth; in fact every thing in the place seemed to be moving in great prosperity, and all seemed determined to become rich; in my feelings they were artificial or imaginary riches.

He said that he and “most of the Twelve were appointed directors” of the bank, which “issued paper to a considerable extent.” Kimball summarized this condition:

This appearance of prosperity led many of the Saints to believe that the time had arrived for the Lord to enrich them with the treasures of the earth and believing so, it stimulated them to great exertions, so much so, that two of the Twelve Lyman E. Johnson and John F. Boynton went to New York and purchased to the amount of twenty thousand dollars worth of goods and entered into the Mercantile business, borrowing considerable money from Polly Voce and other Saints in Boston and the regions round about, and which they have never repaid.⁴⁵³

What surprised Johnson and Boynton, as they looked forward to an expectation that they could repay their loans and live comfortably, was that they had to continually adjust their prices to keep pace with inflation. According to Warren Cowdery, older brother of Oliver Cowdery and editor of the *Messenger and Advocate*, the Kirtland economy had been doing so well that many people came to believe that they were set for life as they accrued notes and deeds and increased their standard of living by making purchases on credit. He categorized these into three groups: those who were self-disciplined and didn’t make investments, those who lost their investments and moved on, and those who “rushed blindly on, till ruin stared them in the face,” and now

⁴⁵² *Ibid.*, 464.

⁴⁵³ “History of Heber Chase Kimball by His Own Dictation,” 47–48, handwriting of Thomas Bullock, Heber C. Kimball Papers, Church History Library. Mary (“Polly”) Vose was born in 1780 and resided in Boston. She was converted through Orson Hyde and Samuel Smith, receiving baptism on July 29, 1832. Unmarried, she provided John Boynton and Lyman Johnson with funds. She remained a faithful member and, with her niece Ruth Vose Sayers, moved to Salt Lake City in 1857. She died in 1866.

found themselves unable to recover from their losses.⁴⁵⁴

When Parley Pratt returned to Kirtland in the spring of 1837 during a pause in his Canadian mission, he became caught up in the whirlwind of accusations and counter accusations. His tale is illustrative of the real pain that otherwise devout members of the church were experiencing. While in Kirtland his firstborn son was born, but the joy he felt was short-lived with the death of his wife Thankful about three hours afterward. He soon remarried and, in the midst of personal turmoil, was suddenly ordered to relinquish his home due to the economic crash, for which he blamed the “powers of darkness.” It was these dark forces, he said, that drew him into the ranks of the discontented and found himself denouncing Joseph Smith over his secular ventures.⁴⁵⁵ On May 23 during this period of rebellion, Pratt wrote to Joseph that, as later published in *Zion’s Watchman*, the “speculating spirit” in Kirtland had persuaded leaders to indulge in “lying, deceiving and taking advantage” of neighbors. He complained that Joseph had sold him three lots for \$2,000 when they had been valued at only \$100.⁴⁵⁶ A postscript not included in *Zion’s Watchman* read, “Do not suppose for a moment that I lack any Confidence in the Book of Mormons or Doctrine and Covenants. Nay it is my firm belief in those Records that hinders my Belief in the course we have Been Led of Late.”⁴⁵⁷

More than half of the apostles and other leading men called for Joseph Smith to step down, but he yet defended himself in the temple on May 28, defiantly prophesying that “he would stand & his enemies fall.”⁴⁵⁸ Some of the members rallied by him, some stood in opposition to him, and others remained neutral. Four loyalists, Able Lamb, Artemus Millet, Marlow Redfield, and Israel Rogers, asked the high council to launch an investigation of David Whitmer, Frederick G. Williams, Lyman E. Johnson, Parley P. Pratt, and Warren Parrish for statements “unworthy of their high calling” and “injurious to the Church of God in which they are high officers.”⁴⁵⁹

Johnson and Orson Pratt filed charges the next day with Bishop Whitney and counselors, as follows:

To the Bishop & his council in Kirtland the Stake of Zion

We prefer the following charges against Pres. Joseph Smith, Jr. viz. for lying & misrepresentation—also for extortion—and for speaking disrespectfully against his brethren behind their backs.

⁴⁵⁴ “The Change of Times,” *Latter Day Saints’ Messenger and Advocate* 3, no. 9 (June 1837): 520–21.

⁴⁵⁵ Terryl L. Givens and Matthew J. Grow, *Parley P. Pratt: The Apostle Paul of Mormonism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 90–92.

⁴⁵⁶ Parley P. Pratt to Joseph Smith, May 23, 1837, *Zion’s Watchman*, March 24, 1838. Emphasis retained. Warren Parrish came into possession of this letter and forwarded it to the Methodist newspaper in New York City, edited by La Roy Sunderland.

⁴⁵⁷ Parley P. Pratt to Joseph Smith, May 23, 1837, reprinted in Arthur H. Deming, ed., *Naked Truths about Mormonism* 1, no. 2 (April 1888): 4. The present location of the letter is unknown.

⁴⁵⁸ Scott G. Kenney, ed., *Wilford Woodruff’s Journal, 1833–1898*, 9 vols. (Midvale, UT: Signature Books, 1983–85), 1:147.

⁴⁵⁹ Kirtland Council Minute Book, pp. 226–27; Collier and Harwell, *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 181–82.

Lyman E. Johnson
Orson Pratt

Kirtland May 29th 1837

This was followed by a complaint against Joseph Smith Sr. by Luke Johnson:

To the Bishop & his council in Kirtland the Stake of Zion

I prefer the following charges against Pres. Joseph Smith Sen viz. closing the doors of the House of the Lord against the high council & refusing to admit them into the same to transact the business of the church

Also for speaking reproachfully against his brethren

Luke Johnson

Kirtland 29th May 1837

Also on the same day, Warren Parrish accused Sidney Rigdon of doctrinal error and laxity of faith:

To the Bishop & his council in Kirtland the Stake of Zion

I prefer the following charges against Pres. Sidney Rigdon viz. expressing an unbelief in the revelations of God, both old and new. also an unbelief in the agency of man and his accountability to God, or that there is Such a principle existing as Sin—and also, for lying & declaring that God required it at his hands

Kirtland 29th May 1837

W. Parrish⁴⁶⁰

The bishopric turned the complaints over to the high council, which ignored them, although Sidney Rigdon had no trouble getting his own complaint against the dissenters heard. Rigdon wanted Warren Parrish, Whitmer, Williams, Lyman Johnson, and Parley Pratt tried for their memberships, but the results turned out to be disastrous for Rigdon. The defendants raised procedural objections regarding conflicting areas of responsibility to which he could not give satisfactory answers. Pratt “objected to being tried by President Rigdon or Joseph Smith Jr. in consequence of their having previously expressed their opinion against him.” Rigdon decided that “under the present circumstances” they “could not conscientiously proceed to try the case,” and he “left the stand.” The clerk, Marcellus F. Cowdery, son of Warren A. Cowdery, noted that “the Council and assembly then dispersed in confusion.”⁴⁶¹ Nothing had been resolved, and it seemed that things were significantly worse than before.

While disaster and suspicion spread throughout Kirtland, Thomas Marsh, president of the quorum, was in Missouri tending to the Mormons’ needs there. He was one of four in the quorum who had stayed loyal to Joseph Smith, along with Kimball, Patten, and Young. Some of

⁴⁶⁰ “To the Bishop & his council,” Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

⁴⁶¹ Kirtland Council Minute Book, pp. 229–30; Collier and Harwell, *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 184. One-third of the high councilors were apparently sympathetic to the dissenters.

the other leading Mormons were wavering, expressing confidence in Joseph Smith one day and disgust the next, but the schism was becoming too wide for some of them to cross back over again.

Marsh was preparing to journey to a quorum meeting in Kirtland when Joseph Smith pronounced a revelation on June 4, 1837, instructing some of the apostles to leave the United States and cross the Atlantic Ocean. Heber Kimball recorded: “The word of the Lord to me [Kimball] through Joseph the prophet [was] that I should go to ‘England to open the door of proclamation to that nation and to he[a]d the same.’”⁴⁶² On June 9 Marsh and Patten began their journey to Kirtland. Marsh explained in his 1858 autobiography that his intent was to “try and reconcile some of the Twelve and others of high standing who had come out in opposition to the Prophet.”⁴⁶³

On July 23 Joseph proclaimed a revelation declaring that Marsh’s sins were forgiven. Such a declaration was designed as a two-edged sword that would both condemn Marsh for unnamed bad behavior and offer absolution at the same time. “Be thou humble,” Marsh was commanded, “and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand and give thee answer to thy prayers.... [P]ray for your brethren of the twelve. Admonish them sharply for my name’s sake, and let them be admonished for all their sins, and be ye faithful before me unto my name.” However much the reminder that he had sins deserving removal may have stung, Marsh took it well and was evidently appeased. The revelation included a warning to the Twelve: “Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph for Verily I say unto you I am with him and my hand shall be over him; and the keys which I have given him, and also to youward shall not be taken from him untill I come.”

According to Smith’s revelation, Marsh held the “keys of discipleship” among all nations. In this capacity, he was to “unlock the door of the kingdom in all places” where the church presidency had not established a stake. “Vengeance” would come from “my house” in Kirtland, “and gross darkness [in] the minds of the people.”

Behold vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth A day of wrath! A day of burning! A day of desolation! of weeping! Of mourning and of lamentation! And as a whirlwind it shall come upon all the face of the earth saith the Lord. And upon my house shall it begin and from my house shall it go forth saith the Lord.⁴⁶⁴

Vilate Kimball wrote to her husband Heber in England to explain how the September 3, 1837, meeting had gone, how they had “proceeded to call a vote upon the heads of the twelve, commencing at the oldest.” She said “they were all received in their apostleship by a unanim[o]us [consent] except Luke and Limon Joh[n]son and Jo[h]n Boynton” and that “the vote went against them.” Martin Harris was “so angry” about being dropped from the high council

⁴⁶² Heber C. Kimball Journal, June 4, 1837, Church History Library.

⁴⁶³ Thomas B. Marsh, “History of Thos. Baldwin Marsh,” *Deseret News* 8, no. 3 (March 24, 1858): 18.

⁴⁶⁴ Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith: Journal, 1832–1842* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992), 2:275–78; LDS D&C 112:10, 12, 15, 17, 23–25; RLDS D&C 105:5–7, 9–10.

that he stormed out of the meeting.⁴⁶⁵ In a twist that caught Vilate by surprise, Warren Parrish was accepted back into fellowship. “Elder [Warren] Parrish (who has been the most rebel[li]ous), is again restored to the fellowship of the church. I have never saw him so humble as he is now.”

On September 10 an “assembly” at the temple included confessions by John Boynton and the Johnsons, after which the remaining congregation of loyal members indicated that it was satisfied. By this means, the apostles were “received into the fellowship of the Saints and [would] retain their office of apostleship.”⁴⁶⁶ The reinstated apostles then administered the sacrament.

The reconciliation with the three apostles was short-lived. Hepzibah Richards, a sister of Willard who went by the name “Hepsy,” wrote to her brother in mid-January 1838 to report that “Luke Johnson and John Boynton are no lo[n]ger of the number of the 12. Elders John Taylor and John Page are chosen to fill their places.”⁴⁶⁷ This was slightly inaccurate because Taylor and Page were chosen as replacements but not ordained until the end of the year, perhaps allowing a suitable delay to give the former apostles a chance to change their minds. Luke would later regret that he retained his determination to go his own way but believed that he had bent his will to that of Smith one too many times. He later blamed his ambivalence on the “spirit of speculation, which at that time was possessed by many of the Saints and elders.” It had distracted him from his spiritual calling. “My mind became darkened, and I was left to pursue my own course,” he wrote.⁴⁶⁸

The dissenters called supporters “lick skillets,” akin to calling someone a “bootlicker” in a later period. The loyalists called the dissatisfied members “apostates.” Before long, the dissenters went their way and established their own body, the Church of Christ, the original name given to the Latter Day Saints before Joseph changed it. It was to be the “old standard Church of Christ,” they specified. Historian Dean Jessee summarized the beginning of 1838 by noting that “under the leadership of Warren Parrish, who had been Joseph Smith’s secretary, approximately thirty prominent men of the Church, including a member of the First Presidency, several of the Twelve, high council, First Council of Seventy, and witnesses of the Book of Mormon, had renounced Joseph Smith and the Church and had established a new organization—the Church of Christ. During this time of apostasy, approximately three hundred left the Church, representing about 15 percent of the Kirtland membership.”⁴⁶⁹

Benjamin Johnson recalled the heart-wrenching separation of friends, missionary companions, and family members and how “notes became due for lands bought at great prices,” resulting in disappointment and bad feelings so that “brotherly love was found smothered by the love of the world.” He lamented that “brethren who had traveled, ministered and suffered

⁴⁶⁵ Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, September 6–11, 1837, Church History Library. Harris was received back into the church by July 18, 1840. H. Michael Marquardt, “Martin Harris: The Kirtland Years, 1831–1870,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 3 (Fall 2002): 16.

⁴⁶⁶ Kirtland Council Minute Book, p. 240; Collier and Harwell, *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 188–89.

⁴⁶⁷ Hepzibah Richards to Willard Richards, January 18–19, 1838, in Kenneth W. Godfrey, Audrey M. Godfrey, and Jill Mulvay Derr, eds., *Women’s Voices: An Untold History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 73.

⁴⁶⁸ “History of Luke Johnson, by Himself,” *Deseret News* 8, no. 11 (May 19, 1858): 57.

⁴⁶⁹ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:217n2.

together, and even placed their lives upon the same altar, now were governed by a feeling of hate and a spirit to accuse each other, and all for the love of Accursed Mammon.”

Developments at Kirtland between mid-December 1837 and mid-January 1838 are sparsely documented, but we know that Joseph’s uncle, John Smith, president of the high council, gathered a fiercely loyal group of high council members to excommunicate some fifty dissenters before the end of the year. In a letter to his son, he explained that

The spiritual condition at this time is gloomy also. I called the High Council together last week and laid Before <them> the case of a compan<y> of Decenters 28 persons[,] where upon mature Discussion [we] proceeded to cut them off from the ch[urch]; the Leaders were Cyrus Smalling Joseph Coe Martin Harris Luke Johnson John Boynton and W[arren] W Parrish. We have cut off Between 40 & 50 from the Chh Since you Left.⁴⁷⁰

Joseph’s stated revelation of January 12, 1838, directed the “Presidency of my Church” to take their families west as “soon as it is practicable,” sealing Kirtland’s fate as a onetime church headquarters. “Your labors are finished in this place for a season,” it read. “Let all your faithfull friends arise with their families also, and get out of this place, and gather themselves together unto Zion and be at peace among yourselves, O ye inhabitants of Zion, or their shall be no saf[e]ty for you; Even so Amen.”⁴⁷¹

In her letter to her brother in England, Hepsy Richards wrote of “a large number” of former church members who had become aggressive and were trying to take over the temple. They had even acquired keys to the two front doors. When a judge delivered the printing press into their hands on January 15, and it was sold at auction, they received partial compensation for losses they had suffered with the demise of the Safety Society Bank. However, in retaliation against the dissenters for having prevailed in court, the loyalists approached the press building one evening and burned it to the ground:

The printing-office has been attached on a judgment that [Grandison] Newell held against the Presidents of K[irtland] money. Last monday it was sold at auction into the hands of Mr. [Nathaniel] Millican, one of the dissenters. At one o[’]clock the night following cousin Mary waked me, and said that Kirtland was all in flames. It proved to be the Printing-office—the fire was then in its height and in one hour it was consumed with all its contents. The Temple and other buildings badly scorched. Tuesday eve a meeting was held and a patrol consisting of 21 men, 3 for each night in the week, chosen to guard the city to prevent further destruction by fire. A part of these men are members of the church—a part dissenters.⁴⁷²

⁴⁷⁰ John and Clarissa to George A. Smith, January 1, 1838, Church History Library, material added to letter by Andrew Jenson not included.

⁴⁷¹ Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 283–84.

⁴⁷² Hepzibah Richards to Willard Richards, January 18–19, 1838, quoted in Godfrey, Godfrey, and Derr, *Women’s Voices*, 71.

Benjamin F. Johnson was shocked that the *Elders' Journal* building “was set on fire by Bro Lyman R. Sherman and destroyed.”⁴⁷³ Sherman, one of the presidents of the Seventy, was summoned to court, with his accomplices, to answer to Justice of the Peace Warren A. Cowdery, a dissenter. When Cowdery was unable to find any material evidence or eyewitness testimony of arson, he discharged the defendants.⁴⁷⁴

After Joseph and Sidney fled Kirtland on January 12, many of the loyalists feared that their lives were in danger. The *Painesville Republican* printed a letter in February from Warren Parrish proposing that Joseph and Sidney had been less than honest in their statements and had engaged in financial fraud. They “lie by revelation,” Parrish wrote, “swindle by revelation, cheat and defraud by revelation, run away by revelation; and if they do not mend their ways, I fear they will at last be damned by revelation.” An accompanying note signed by Luke Johnson, John Boynton, Sylvester Smith, and Leonard Rich affirmed the facts related by Parrish “according to our best recollections,” as well as the sentiment.⁴⁷⁵ In March, Parrish and Boynton had letters published in Belfast, Maine, relating events from the past few years, expressing the opinion that Joseph and Sidney had defrauded many people. Boynton dwelt on his sacrifice for the church:

It has been my lot to be called and chosen one of the twelve Latter Day Apostles. I have held important stations in the church for about five years, and have travelled much and preached much in the Eastern States, and built up many churches; and indeed I have baptized hundreds in your own State, and did it in all honesty and good faith; but after becoming acquainted with the above facts, and many others of the like character, I have, with the same principles of honesty and good faith, withdrawn from them.⁴⁷⁶

For all of this, the “great apostasy” of 1837 constituted the greatest threat to the church’s future. The general complaint was that Joseph Smith had shown himself to be fallible by succumbing to vanity and changing the revelations prior to their publication to make God sound more polished; also for amassing of real estate and chattel in the run up to the Kirtland bank failure.⁴⁷⁷

George A. Smith, an eyewitness to the conflicts of 1837, told an audience twenty years later that the dissenters were guilty of “adultery or covetousness” and had “gone to hell.” There they would “lift up their eyes, asking for some relief or benefit from those they once tried to

⁴⁷³ Benjamin Franklin Johnson, “A Life Review,” ca. 1894, 24, in Benjamin Franklin Johnson Papers, Church History Library. At the top of this page, Johnson wrote: “Printing office burned by L R Sherman”; also in Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Mesa: Twenty-first Century Printing, 1992), 29–30.

⁴⁷⁴ Oliver Cowdery’s Docket Book, January 17–19, 1838, Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

⁴⁷⁵ Warren Parrish to the *Painesville Republican* 2, no. 14–15 (February 15, 1838): 3.

⁴⁷⁶ “Mormonism,” *Waldo Patriot* 1, no. 19 (May 4, 1838): 1.

⁴⁷⁷ For an examination of causes of dissent at Kirtland, see Marvin S. Hill, “Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of the Causes of Kirtland Dissent,” *Church History* 49, no. 3 (September 1980): 286–97.

destroy.”⁴⁷⁸ It is interesting that in casting about for a reason to dismiss the dissenters, he would land on the same charges that they had brought against Joseph Smith. He also seemed to overlook the fact that these men had initially been appointed to leadership because of their reputations of sound judgment and moral consistency. It was at Kirtland that John Boynton and Luke Johnson were excommunicated. Many of the dissenters had remained loyal to Joseph Smith during very difficult times when many of lesser conviction might have long since abandoned him. When some of the most committed decided to break off their association with the church, it could not have been a decision they took at all lightly.

⁴⁷⁸ George A. Smith, January 10, 1858, *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (London: Latter-day Saints Book Depot, 1854–86), 7:115.

The Nauvoo Council of Fifty Minutes⁴⁷⁹

Background

In September 2016 the LDS Church Historian’s Press made available in print the early minutes of the Nauvoo, Illinois, Council or Quorum of Fifty, or Kingdom of God of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Though the Council was in operation for only a short time in Nauvoo, the release of the minutes now allows scholars access to these vitally important deliberations.

Council meetings were held in Nauvoo during a three-month period in 1844: March, April, and May. They were recorded, copied, and based on memory and on the journal of William Clayton. Though there had been some discussion favoring destruction of the minutes, Clayton made sure that a historical record would contain what took place. Willard Richards was the recorder and Clayton the clerk. The organization commenced March 10–11, 1844.

Within the context of American history the Mormon movement was different from and yet the same as other religious organizations. Some thought that a New Jerusalem would be built on the American landscape.⁴⁸⁰ In preparing for the second coming of Jesus, the Church of Christ had come to regard itself as the kingdom of God with a mission to spread the latter-day gospel throughout the world.⁴⁸¹ There was thus no need for a kingdom or government separate from this restored church or the US government. But that changed over time as a result of conflict within and outside the church. In 1838 an organization known as the Danites was formed.⁴⁸² W. W. Phelps thought it was treasonable “to set up a government within a Government.”⁴⁸³

⁴⁷⁹ First published in *The John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 38 (Spring/Summer 2018).

⁴⁸⁰ For example, see Gershon Greenburg, *The Holy Land in American Religious Thought, 1620–1948* (Lanham, MD: University Press of America, 1994).

⁴⁸¹ “Revelations ... A revelation on prayer, given October 30, 1831,” *The Evening and the Morning Star* 1 (September 1832): 2, Independence, MO. See LDS and RLDS Doctrine and Covenants 65.

⁴⁸² Dean C. Jessee, Mark Ashurst-McGee, and Richard L. Jensen, eds., *Journals, Volume 1: 1832–1839* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2008), 231, 293, 464.

⁴⁸³ Missouri General Assembly, *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons; and the Evidence Given before the Hon. Austin A. King, Judge of the Fifth Judicial Circuit of the State of Missouri, at the Court-House in Richmond, in a Criminal Court of Inquiry, begun November 12, 1838, on the trial of Joseph*

During the Nauvoo period of church history there developed an inclination to form secret organizations. One such group was the Council of Fifty. Some thirty-five years ago two studies of this council were published but were limited to available historical records⁴⁸⁴ because these three volumes of minutes were not available at the time. Although there seems to have been a problem in keeping the topics discussed in the meetings confidential, such is no longer the case.

Several early programs were commenced at Nauvoo by Joseph Smith in 1844. They included plans for westward migration of church headquarters toward the general areas of Texas, Oregon, California and the Rocky Mountains. After writing letters in November 1843 to a few presidential candidates on their views of the Mormons, Joseph Smith decided to become a candidate himself for president of the United States. His main publication on the subject, written for him by W.W. Phelps, was titled, *General Smith's Views of the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States*, and was first published in Nauvoo in February 1844. Sidney Rigdon became Smith's running mate for the office of vice president.

Latter Day Saints still continued to view themselves, especially in Nauvoo, in a persecution mode, envisioning their actions as a defense of their rights under the Nauvoo Charter. Their view was that the US government was as much responsible for actions against them as were the states of Missouri and Illinois. As such, survival became an existential objective in the quest to protect their church and their leader Joseph Smith.⁴⁸⁵

Joseph Smith as Chairman of the Council

The council consisted of about fifty men who were bound by secrecy and sworn in allegiance to chairman Joseph Smith. Members of the Kingdom of God were forming a theocracy wherein the voice of God was to become the voice of the council. They envisioned their group as the kingdom that Daniel of the Old Testament saw coming out of a mountain and filling the earth. As recorded in the minutes, the name of the select organization was the result of a revelation pronounced by church president Joseph Smith on March 14.

The name of the council was discussed and the Lord was pleased to give the following Revelation; Verily thus saith the Lord, this is the name by which you shall be called, The Kingdom of God and his Laws, with the keys and power thereof, and judgment in the hands of his servants. Ahman Christ.⁴⁸⁶

Smith, Jr., and others, for High Treason and Other Crimes Against the State (Fayette, Missouri: Printed at the office of the Boon's Lick Democrat, 1841), 122.

⁴⁸⁴ See D. Michael Quinn, "The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844–1945," *BYU Studies* 20 (Winter 1980): 163–97 and Andrew F. Ehat, "'It Seems Like Heaven Began on Earth': Joseph Smith and the Constitution of the Kingdom of God," *BYU Studies* 20 (Spring 1980): 253–79.

⁴⁸⁵ See Bill Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt, "Mortal Enemies: Mormons and Missourians 1839-1844," *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 36, no. 1 (Spring/Summer 2016): 35–80.

⁴⁸⁶ Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 14, 1844, in Matthew J. Grow, Ronald K. Esplin, Mark Ashurst-McGee, Gerrit J. Dirkmaat, and Jeffrey D. Mahas, eds., *Council of Fifty, Minutes, March 1844–January 1846*, vol. 1 of the Administrative Records series of *The Joseph Smith Papers* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2016), 48–49 (hereafter as *Council of Fifty*,

At a church conference on April 5, Sidney Rigdon of the First Presidency mentioned in his discourse: “When God sets up a system of salvation, he sets up a system of government; when I speak of a government I mean what I say; I mean government that shall rule over temporal and spiritual affairs.”⁴⁸⁷ Six days later, at a meeting of the Council of Fifty, Rigdon presented a history of the council and said, “The design was to form a Theocracy according to the will of Heaven, planted without any intention to interfere with any government of the world. We wish to have nothing to do with them. . . . It is nevertheless necessary to be careful and prudent inasmuch as there is so much disposition in the minds of men to cry treason at every thing we do.” Rigdon “said further that we had chosen our beloved Prest. Joseph Smith as our standing chairman, and our mouth between us and our God.”⁴⁸⁸

Joseph Smith Received as Prophet, Priest and King

It was also in this secret group of men where they received “from this time henceforth and forever, Joseph Smith, as our Prophet, Priest & King, and uphold him in that capacity in which God has anointed him.” The council adjourned the morning meeting “with shouts of Hossanna [*sic*] to God and the Lamb Amen and Amen.”⁴⁸⁹ This occurred on April 11, 1844, at a meeting in the Nauvoo Masonic Hall, but the action did not remain a secret for long. A report published in New York from an individual who visited Nauvoo read:

In many respects, Joe [Smith] has the advantage over his illustrious predecessor [Mahomet]: he, Joe, is not only Prophet, but is also Mormon King, and in his triune function of Prophet, Priest and King, he lords it over God's heritage with such a strict eye to the Lord's treasury, that he will by and by be enabled to present the world with a faint imitation of the outward glories of Solomon's temple.⁴⁹⁰

At the April 18 council meeting Elder David Yearsley (1808–49), a merchant and council member, commented on setting up the kingdom:

We can try to elect our president for a scare crow, but how can a man be elected president when he is already proclaimed king. Can he give up his office for a smaller one.[?] He is perfectly willing to go and electioneer, to blind the eyes of the people, but he wants to see our king upheld in his office here.⁴⁹¹

Minutes). The minutes are located in MS 30055, Council of Fifty record books, 1844–1846, LDS Church History Library, Salt Lake City.

⁴⁸⁷ “Conference Minutes,” *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 9 (May 1, 1844): 524.

⁴⁸⁸ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 11, 1844, 88–89.

⁴⁸⁹ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 11, 1844, 95–96.

⁴⁹⁰ “Life in Nauvoo,” April 25th, 1844, in *New-York Daily Tribune* vol. 4, no. 41, whole no. 975, May 28, 1844, p. 4, column 1.

⁴⁹¹ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 18, 1844, 125.

Joseph Smith was careful in cautioning council members, “It is not wisdom to use the term ‘king’ all the while. Let us use the term ‘proper source’ instead of ‘king’ and it will be all understood and no person can take advantage.”⁴⁹²

Excommunication of William Law, Jane Law and Others

There was pressure from within the church by stalwart William Law, recently a member of the First Presidency, against what he regarded as secret practices not included in the teachings found in the Book of Mormon or the Doctrine and Covenants. The April 18 Council of Fifty meeting ended about 5:30 p.m., followed by a special “council of the authorities”⁴⁹³ at 6:00 p.m. While six members of the Quorum of Twelve and seven of the Nauvoo High Council were present, this was neither a High Council meeting nor a council under Bishop Newel K. Whitney, who was also in attendance. Of the thirty-two men present at the meeting, twenty-three were members of the Council of Fifty.⁴⁹⁴ Notably, neither Joseph Smith nor Sidney Rigdon attended. William and Jane Law and three other church members were excommunicated, and a notice to that effect was printed in the *Times and Seasons*:

Nauvoo, April, 18, 1844.

Robert D. Foster, Wilson Law, William Law, and Jane Law of Nauvoo; and Howard Smith, of Scott county, Illinois, for unchristian like conduct, were cut off from the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, by the authorities of said church, and ordered to be published in the Times and Seasons.

W. RICHARDS,
Church Recorder.⁴⁹⁵

Even after this event there was still time for negotiation and reconciliation between the church and the Law family. At the May 6, 1844 Council of Fifty meeting Sidney Rigdon “reported that he had labored with the Laws without accomplishing any thing, but judged that they had taken a course which they never would become reconciled.” The Council of Fifty turned the offenders over “to the buffetings of Satan.”⁴⁹⁶ William Law afterwards helped establish the *Nauvoo Expositor*, a newspaper that would soon publish negative articles against both the church and the Nauvoo city charter.⁴⁹⁷ Soon afterwards William Law would become a leader in a reformed church.

⁴⁹² *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 18, 1844, 128.

⁴⁹³ Willard Richards Journal, April 18, 1844, MS 1490, Church History Library.

⁴⁹⁴ See Joseph Smith Journal, kept by Willard Richards, April 18, 1844, Church History Library; also in Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Brent M. Rogers, eds., *Journals, Volume 3: May 1843–June 1844* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2015), 231–32.

⁴⁹⁵ *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 8 (April 15, 1844): 511, printed circa April 20, 1844.

⁴⁹⁶ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, May 6, 1844, 152, 154.

⁴⁹⁷ [No title], *Nauvoo Expositor* 1 (June 7, 1844): 2, column 3.

Constitution of the Kingdom of God

A committee was appointed to write a constitution and bylaws of the Council of Fifty but had been unable to complete the assignment. Accordingly, Joseph Smith proclaimed a revelation on April 25 as follows:

Verily thus saith the Lord, ye are my constitution, and I am your God, and ye are my spokesmen. From henceforth do as I shall command you. Saith the Lord.⁴⁹⁸

Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith's vice-presidential running mate, said on May 6 "as the Lord God lives Joseph shall be President next term and I will follow him."⁴⁹⁹ Six days later Smith proclaimed in a speech near the Nauvoo temple, "I calculate to be one of the Instruments of setting up the Kingdom of Daniel, by the word of the Lord, and I intend to lay a foundation that will revolutionize the whole world."⁵⁰⁰

The last meeting of the fifty was held on May 25, 1844, with Joseph Smith in attendance. Shortly thereafter on June 7, the only issue of the accusatory *Nauvoo Expositor* was published, and twenty days later Joseph and Hyrum Smith lay dead of murder at Carthage jail.

Brigham Young as Chairman of the Council

The first meeting of the Council of Fifty following the death of Joseph Smith was held on February 4, 1845. This initiated three clusters of meetings that would be held in Nauvoo: February 4–May 10, 1845; September 9–October 4, 1845; and January 1846. Wanting nothing to do with the US government, members instead focused on five topics: (1) Brigham Young as successor to Joseph Smith; (2) the gentiles' rejection of the gospel; (3) confirmation of Brigham Young as prophet, priest and king; (4) plans for deputizing Indians to assist in the mission; and (5) plans for the western migration.

In early 1845 the first copies of a *Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-Day Saints. To all the Kings of the World; To the President of the United States of America; To the Governors of the several States; And to the Rulers and People of all Nations: Greetings* were published in New York. The proclamation was composed by Council of Fifty member Parley P. Pratt and proclaimed, "Know ye:— That the kingdom of God has come: as has been predicted by ancient prophets, and prayed for in all ages; even that kingdom which shall fill the whole earth, and shall stand for ever."⁵⁰¹

⁴⁹⁸ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 25, 1844, 136–37.

⁴⁹⁹ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, May 6, 1844, 158.

⁵⁰⁰ Discourse reported by Thomas Bullock, May 12, 1844, Joseph Smith Collection, MS 155, box 4, folder 6, Church History Library.

⁵⁰¹ *Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter-Day Saints. To all the Kings of the World; To the President of the United States of America; To the Governors of the several States; And to the Rulers and People of all Nations: Greetings* (New York, April 6, 1845), 1.

Brigham Young the Successor to Joseph Smith

At the first council meeting after Joseph Smith's death, held on February 4, 1845, it was confirmed that Brigham Young was "president of this quorum" and "president of the Kingdom of God."⁵⁰² Orson Pratt said it was "self evident that the president of the church stands as the head of this council."⁵⁰³ Willard Richards told Council members, "Instead of saying K-i-n-g say chairman." As indicated by William Clayton in the minutes, Young was the "legal successor of president Joseph as our head."⁵⁰⁴

Members of the council knew there were leaks of what was discussed in their meetings. W. W. Phelps commented, "Tis not yet a year since this council was first organized, yet, some have told what has passed here although under the most solemn obligations of secrecy."⁵⁰⁵ Orrin Porter Rockwell said "those [who] leaked out shall pay the forfeit by the loss of his head; if I find them."⁵⁰⁶

The minutes of the special conference for April 7, 1845, included the proposal by Apostle George A. Smith "that we acknowledge President Brigham Young as the President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to this Church, and nation, and all nations, and also the President of the whole Church of Latter Day Saints," which vote was carried unanimously.⁵⁰⁷ The minutes were edited for publication in the *Times and Seasons*, eliminating the phrase, "nation, and all nations, and also the President of the whole Church of Latter Day Saints" and adding the word "generation" to read "that we acknowledge President Brigham Young is the president of the quorum of the Twelve apostles to this church and generation."⁵⁰⁸

The Gentiles Have Rejected the Gospel⁵⁰⁹

Mormon scriptures predicted a time when the fullness of the gospel would be rejected by the gentiles. From that point the gospel would go to the house of Israel, of which the American Indians were a remnant. This would be considered in prophetic words that "the times of the

⁵⁰² *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, February 4, 1845, 221.

⁵⁰³ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, February 4, 1845, 223.

⁵⁰⁴ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, February 4, 1845, 224–25.

⁵⁰⁵ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, February 4, 1845, 220.

⁵⁰⁶ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, February 4, 1845, 224.

⁵⁰⁷ General Church Minutes, CR 100 318, box 1, folder 32, April 7, 1845, Church History Library. Other individuals mentioned Brigham Young as church president. See Samuel James to S[idney]. Rigdon, January 28, 1845, *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 9 (March 1, 1845): 130, column 2, Pittsburgh, PA; Daniel Davis Diary, MS 1676, folder 1, 12, Church History Library; Appointment of David Candland to a mission in England, January 22, 1846, signed by Brigham Young "President of the church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints," copy in my possession. See also D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books in association with Smith Research Associates, 1994), 178, 648, 650–51.

⁵⁰⁸ "Conference Minutes," *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 7 (April 15, 1845): 870.

⁵⁰⁹ See William Shepard, "The Concept of a 'Rejected Gospel' in Mormon History, Part 1," *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 130–81.

Gentiles be fulfilled.”⁵¹⁰ The concept of the gentiles’ rejection was discussed in Council of Fifty meetings.

William Clayton did not attend the meeting of February 27, 1845, as he was ill. In separate minutes of the “Meeting of the Twelve & others,” recorded by clerk Thomas Bullock, it included the comment of W. W. Phelps that “the Kingdom is <now> rent from the Gentiles.”⁵¹¹ Two days later council president Brigham Young explained, “The gentiles have rejected the gospel and we will carry it to the branch of the house of Israel in the west. Let the gentiles remain in ignorance unless they will come to the standard.”⁵¹²

This discussion continued in the month of March through the next four meetings of the Council. George Miller said the “gentiles have rejected every thing that belongs to salvation” and “the fullness of the gentiles has come in.”⁵¹³

At the March 11 meeting Brigham Young said, “He don[’]t care about preaching to the gentiles any longer” but “feels as Lyman Wight said let the damned scoundrels be killed, let them be swept off from the earth, and then we can go and be baptized for them.” Young continued, “The gentiles have rejected the gospel, and where shall we go to preach. We cannot go any where but to the house of Israel ... This is the last call we will make to them and if they don[’]t listen to it we will sweep them out of existance [existence].” Heber Kimball agreed.⁵¹⁴

On March 18 Young confirmed what he had stated the previous week. Orson Spencer expressed his feelings, “Our salvation is the destruction of the gentiles and their destruction will be our salvation.”⁵¹⁵ Young stated, “The kingdom is rent from the gentiles, and has been ever since this council was organised.”⁵¹⁶

At the church conference of April 8 Heber C. Kimball “proposed to withdraw fellowship from the Gentiles’ eniquity [iniquity], which was done by a unanimous vote” and it was explained: “Now they are disfellowshipt.”⁵¹⁷ Brigham Young said “that, by martyring the Prophet and Patriarch, the Gentiles have rejected the gospel.”⁵¹⁸ During the next conference in October, Apostle Kimball mentioned, “At the last conference, a vote was passed that the Gentiles were cut off; and now, why do you want to labor for them. Inasmuch as the Gentiles reject us, lo! we turn to the Jews.”⁵¹⁹

⁵¹⁰ *Book of Mormon* (Palmyra [New York]: E. B. Grandin, 1830), 487–88; *A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ* (Independence [MO]: W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), 4:5–6 (March 1829); 48:25–27 (March 1831).

⁵¹¹ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, in printed Appendix 1, February 27, 1845, 533, angle brackets indicate words above the line. See also Jedediah S. Rogers, ed., *The Council of Fifty: A Documentary History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014), 83.

⁵¹² *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 1, 1845, 255.

⁵¹³ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 4, 1845, 289.

⁵¹⁴ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 11, 1845, 299–301.

⁵¹⁵ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 18, 1845, 335.

⁵¹⁶ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 18, 1845, 338.

⁵¹⁷ “Speech Delivered by Heber C. Kimball,” April 8, 1845 in *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 13 (July 15, 1845): 973.

⁵¹⁸ “The Conference,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 2, no. 50 (April 16, 1845): 2.

⁵¹⁹ “Conference Minutes,” April 8, 1845, *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 16 (November 1, 1845): 1012.

Brigham Young Confirmed as Prophet, Priest and King

Some new members were inducted into the council on March 1. They voted in the affirmative to “receive Prest. B. Young as successor of Prest. Joseph Smith and prophet, priest, and king to this kingdom forever after.”⁵²⁰ On March 4 those present “all voted to sustain Prest Young in his place as standing chairman, Prophet, Priest, and King.” Heber C. Kimball, filling in as chairman for this meeting, “said that this was the kingdom which Daniel saw would be set up in the last days which would overthrow and subdue all other kingdoms.”⁵²¹

Beyond the Rocky Mountains

Discussions during the next three March meetings included harsh words of Brigham Young as summarized by the clerk: “in regard to going beyond the rocky mountains, he don[']t feel like it, it is so far to go there, and have to come back to kill off these cursed scoundrels.”⁵²² Orson Pratt thought “to read the minutes seems to him to be a waste of time.”⁵²³

It was not always clear where President Young intended the Mormons to place their new home. He said “it was Joseph[']s mind that the head of California Bay was the place for us where we could have commercial advantages, but he also proposed other places for our consideration.”⁵²⁴ John Taylor said “We ask no favors of the United States of any kind nor never mean to.”⁵²⁵ Concerning the command to build the Nauvoo House, Young explained:

It is a commandment from God through the prophet Joseph to build that house and shall we say we can[']t build it? no. If we say we can build it, we can do it. There are sacred records deposited in the foundation of that house and it is our duty to build the house and cover up those records.⁵²⁶

After hearing a report from John M. Bernhisel, counselor John Taylor said he was much pleased:

Sufficient information has been given to prove that it is a good place for the saints to make a location, that they may build a City on the Coast of the Pacific and carry the gospel to the other part of the globe. This would be a good place for the

⁵²⁰ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 1, 1845, 256.

⁵²¹ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 4, 1845, 278.

⁵²² *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 11, 1845, 303.

⁵²³ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 18, 1845, 325.

⁵²⁴ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 18, 1845, 328.

⁵²⁵ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 18, 1845, 330.

⁵²⁶ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 18, 1845, 344. The list of items deposited in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House on October 2, 1841 included the original Book of Mormon manuscript. Recorded in the Book of the Law of the Lord under the date of December 29, 1841, see Andrew H. Hedges, Alex D. Smith, and Richard Lloyd Anderson, eds., *Journals, Volume 2: December 1841–April 1843* (Salt Lake City: Church Historian’s Press, 2011), 19–20.

time being, there is plenty of cattle and provisions of every kind. We will soon be independent of this nation, and we will be the head and not the tail.⁵²⁷

Shod with the Preparation of the Gospel of Peace

Apostle Heber C. Kimball said in his discourse at an April 8 church conference that he wanted the church members to finish the Nauvoo Temple and take stock in the Nauvoo House. He quoted Ephesians 6:15 (KJV), “And your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” But in this case the reference was to having weapons, like knives, guns and rifles that could be used against others. Kimball asked and answered:

What is the object do you suppose of making the proclamation for all the saints to gather in, from all the United States, if we want to send them back again? We want them here, that they may help us to build the Temple, and the Nauvoo House; and want them to bring their firelocks, and learn to use them, and keep them well cleaned and loaded, and primed, so that they will go off the first shot, that every man may be in readiness, and prepared, that is, every man shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; (holding up his cane as a sample;) that is the way.⁵²⁸

What Kimball was referencing in this passage was clarified in the Council of Fifty minutes. At the first Council meeting after the April conference Peter Haws “said he had long contemplated the means whereby cousin Lemuel could be shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace.” “Preparation of the gospel of peace” was explained in a footnote: “This phrase was used by Latter-day Saints at this time to describe being armed.”⁵²⁹ Haws commented, “The Indians think nothing of going two or three thousand miles, and whenever it is made known to them, that they can have a preparation of the gospel to administer to this nation they will go into it.”⁵³⁰ The idea was to give weapons to the American Indians.

The minutes reported that John Taylor “believes in every one of the Indian tribes being shod with the preparation of the gospel.”⁵³¹ Charles C. Rich said, “we should have the pulling of the strings, and that we should have the influence with the Indians and not any other nation. He

⁵²⁷ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, March 22, 1845, 352.

⁵²⁸ “Speech Delivered by Heber C. Kimball,” April 8, 1845, *Times and Seasons* 6, no. 13 (July 15, 1845): 971. The local newspaper made an interesting reference to the Nauvoo cane, “It is becoming quite fashionable for gentlemen to possess a *Nauvoo cane*; and the good people of this city of peace, also use a *cane*,—but the point of the staff, is, to have it ‘shod with the preparation of the gospel.’” “Nauvoo Canes,” *Nauvoo Neighbor* 2, no. 52 (April 30, 1845): 2, column 5, emphasis retained. Kimball’s speech was reprinted in the *Warsaw Signal* 2 (October 22, 1845):1.

⁵²⁹ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 11, 1845, 403, and note 665.

⁵³⁰ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 11, 1845, 408.

⁵³¹ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 11, 1845, 406.

would be glad to have the Indians put in possession of the arms, but let us have the influence of dictating and controlling the whole matter.”⁵³²

Theodore Turley, who had been commissioned on March 18 to make Bowie knives and fifteen-shooters (rifles), “said he had been appointed to go to work and make some tools for the preparation of the gospel” and needed a larger shop.⁵³³

In May Thomas Bullock recorded Brigham Young as saying, “I want you all to be shod with the preparat[ion]n. of the Gospel – have your firelocks clean – be ready at a moments warning – to slaughter all that come – they will find death here – c [and] hell will follow after – our enemies if they tho[ugh]t. we were not prepared, wo[ul]d. be upon us – we have influence in the world – every one be peaceable, atte[n]d. to their own bus[iness]: c [and] if an enemy comes to destroy me or my family I wo[ul]d. send them to hell across lots.”⁵³⁴

At the May 10 Council meeting Heber C. Kimball “moved that we declare ourselves an independant [sic] nation,” and Orson Pratt “said he did not think it necessary, inasmuch as the nation has already made us independant.” Brigham Young “stated that through his advise brother Turley has commenced making fifteen shooters, and has one here for a sample. He wants some of one of the brethren to buy it, that Turley can send to St Louis and get some more barrels. The Gun was sold to W. [Willard] Richards.”⁵³⁵

More Plans for the Western Migration

At the first meeting in September Brigham Young indicated “that there is not much difficulty in sending people beyond the mountains. We have designed sending them somewhere near the Great Salt Lake and after we get there, in a little time we can work our way to the head of the California Bay, or the Bay of the St [San] Francisco.”⁵³⁶ Six days later Young wrote in a letter to Samuel Brannan, “I wish you together with your press[,] paper and ten thousand of the brethren were now in California at the Bay of St. Francisco, and if you can clear yourself and go there do so and we will meet you there.”⁵³⁷

The Council of Fifty was still making considerations on where to locate in January 1846. In their next-to-last meeting William Clayton recorded in the minutes concerning Brigham Young, “When we leave here his mind is to go just beyond the Rocky mountains, somewhere on the Mexican claim and the United States will have no business to come there and if they do we will treat them as enemies.”⁵³⁸

⁵³² *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 11, 1845, 408.

⁵³³ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, April 11, 1845, 416.

⁵³⁴ General Church Minutes, CR 100 318, Box 1, folder 33, May 4, 1845, Church History Library.

⁵³⁵ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, May 10, 1845, 454.

⁵³⁶ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, September 9, 1845, 472.

⁵³⁷ Brigham Young office files, Brigham Young to Samuel Brannan, September 15, 1845, retained copy, CR 1234 1, box 16, folder 4, Church History Library. Printed in Will Bagley, ed., *Scoundrel's Tale: The Samuel Brannan Papers* (Spokane, WA: Arthur H. Clark Company, 1999), 91–92. The words “and we will meet you there” were omitted when the Manuscript History of Brigham Young was compiled.

⁵³⁸ *Council of Fifty, Minutes*, January 11, 1846, 513.

Summary

We have learned from the minutes that both Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were accepted in their chairmanships as prophet, priest and king in this latter-day “Kingdom of God.” Many of the ideas planned in Council meetings, thought to be important at the time, would never occur. William Shepard explained:

After the deaths of Brigham Young in 1877 and Orson Pratt in 1881, the doctrine of Gentile rejection was rarely mentioned. Reasons for its decline include the Church’s distancing itself from doctrines which antagonized non-Mormons, a transition away from teaching that the millennium was imminent, and the fact that the doctrine impeded the missionary program. Another important reason was that the Church was beginning its slow transition from a posture of confrontation with the United States to an attitude that supporting the nation in times of crisis was a patriotic and religious duty.⁵³⁹

The minutes indicate the existence of big projects that would never take place. The death of Joseph Smith would abruptly terminate his presidential campaign. Under Brigham Young’s leadership there would be no alliance with the American Indians to form a force against the US government. Missionaries would not depart to the Pacific Islands as planned. But such outcomes would hardly be problematic to council members since the “Kingdom of God” would be moving forward regardless. The plan to move west was to them the overriding concern. But conflict with the United States government would yet resume years later.⁵⁴⁰

With the publication of the Nauvoo Council of Fifty minutes by the Church Historian’s Press, one might now hope that further advances in scholarship and history would follow with the publication of additional historical records, such as the remaining minutes of the Council of Fifty and the Nauvoo journals of William Clayton. A recent compilation of articles using the Nauvoo minutes has started the process.⁵⁴¹ In the final analysis, we should be grateful to those who have made this wealth of documentary records of the Latter Day Saint movement available for professional study.

⁵³⁹ William Shepard, “The Concept of a ‘Rejected Gospel’ in Mormon History, Part 1,” *Journal of Mormon History* 34, no. 2 (Spring 2008): 153.

⁵⁴⁰ See William P. MacKinnon, ed., *At Sword’s Point, Part 1: A Documentary History of the Utah War to 1858* (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2008) and *At Sword’s Point, Part 2: A Documentary History of the Utah War, 1858-1859* (Norman, OK: Arthur H. Clark Company, an imprint of the University of Oklahoma Press, 2016).

⁵⁴¹ Matthew J. Grow and R. Eric Smith, eds, *The Council of Fifty: What the Records Reveal about Mormon History* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, in cooperation with Deseret Book, 2017).

A Chronology: 1816-1844 and Thoughts about Joseph Smith

Common Abbreviations

- 1830 BOM = Joseph Smith Jr., *The Book of Mormon: An Account Written by the hand of Mormon, Upon Plates Taken from the Plates of Nephi*. By Joseph Smith, Junior, author and proprietor. Palmyra, New York: Printed by E. B. Grandin for the author, 1830. Cited with page number and followed by versification of both LDS (2013) and RLDS and Church of Christ (Temple Lot) churches. Text includes selections from the Bible such as Isaiah, Exodus, and Matthew.
- Abraham = The Book of Abraham in *The Pearl of Great Price*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013. First published in 1842 in *Times and Seasons*, Nauvoo, Illinois.
- BC = A Book of Commandments, for the Government of the Church of Christ. Zion [Independence, Missouri]: Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833 [in press 1833].
- BOM = Book of Mormon. Uses shorter chapter numbers: Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013 and Monongahela, Pennsylvania: Church of Jesus Christ, 2001. Uses chapter numbers of 1830 edition: Independence, Missouri: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], 1908 [Authorized Edition]; 1966 [Revised Authorized Edition, 1992] and Church of Christ (Temple Lot), 1990.
- D&C = Doctrine and Covenants, first published in 1835. Includes some later redactions not in earlier texts, should be compared with early manuscripts and contemporary writings.
- JS Bible = *The Holy Bible* (Cooperstown, NY: H. & E. Phinney, 1828). Oliver Cowdery purchased this printing of the King James Version of the Bible for Joseph Smith and himself on October 8, 1829. It was bought at the Egbert B. Grandin Bookstore in Palmyra, New York. Contains the Apocrypha. Used for Bible revision. Contains markings for words to be omitted.
- JS Revelations = *Joseph Smith's 1828-1843 Revelations* (Maitland, Florida: Xulon Press, 2013) by H. Michael Marquardt.

- JST = *The Holy Scriptures*. Published by the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1991; called Joseph Smith Translation of the Bible by LDS Church (JST). First published in 1867.
- KJV = King James Version of the Bible. 1769 or later printings used. First published in 1611.
- LDS = Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormon), headquartered in Salt Lake City, Utah.
- LDS archives = Church History Library, also known as Archives, Family and Church History Department, Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City..
- LDS D&C = *The Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013.
- Lost Apostles = *Lost Apostles: Forgotten Members of Mormonism's Original Quorum of Twelve*. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2014. By William Shepard and H. Michael Marquardt
- Moses = Selections from the Book of Moses in *The Pearl of Great Price*. Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 2013.
Text: Moses 1:1-8:12; Moses 2:1-8:12 part of revision of Bible
Compare text with Genesis 1:1-5:32 (KJV)
- NT = New Testament of King James Version, 1769 printing or later.
- OT = Old Testament of King James Version, 1769 printing or later.
- PGP = Pearl of Great Price. Published by the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 2013. First published in 1851, revised edition in 1902.
- RLDS = Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Community of Christ), headquartered in Independence, Missouri.
- RLDS D&C = *Book of Doctrine and Covenants*. Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints [now Community of Christ], 1990.

A Chronology: 1816-1844

PALMYRA, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

1816

Joseph Smith Sr. arrives in Palmyra, New York

1817

April

Joseph Smith, Sr., is living on Main Street in the village of Palmyra, New York, on Road District 26.

1818

January 31

First Lines in Arithmetic, For the Use of Young Scholars (Hartford, Connecticut, 1818); book signed "Joseph Smiths Book January 31st, 1818."

March 27

Joseph Smith Sr. and Alvin Smith sign a promissory note to Jeremiah Hurlbut for sixty-five dollars.

April

Joseph Sr. is residing in Palmyra village. To pay half of taxes on land of Jeremiah Hurlbut.

ca. July 10

Joseph Jr. works half Day Drawing hay for Jeremiah Hurlbut of Palmyra.

1819

February 6

Joseph Smith [Sr.] plaintiff vs Jeremiah Hurlbut defendant; Joseph Smith Jr. testifies for plaintiff.

April

Joseph Sr. is still residing in Palmyra village.

1820

April

Joseph Sr. and family are located at the south end of Stafford Road in Palmyra Township; Alvin Smith is residing in the village of Palmyra.

June 13

The Smith family is living on land owned by Samuel Jennings.

June 22

Tax on 300 acres of Lot 1 in Farmington (later Manchester), Ontario County, is to be paid by Nicholas Evertson heirs.

July 14

Power of attorney is given to Zachariah Seymour.

Summer

Joseph Sr. and Alvin article for 100 acres of land in Farmington, Lot 1, from Zachariah Seymour land agent for Nicholas Evertson's heirs.

1820-1821

Joseph Smith, Jr., has a personal forgiveness of sins; he is an exhorter for the Methodist class in Palmyra and attends a local debating club.

1821

- April Joseph Sr., Alvin, and Hyrum Smith are residing at the south end of Stafford Road in Palmyra.
- July 7 Joseph Sr. is taxed for 100 acres of Lot 1 in Farmington (later named Manchester).
- July 18 Daughter Lucy Smith is born in Palmyra Township.
- 1822 Joseph Jr. is present when Willard Chase finds a stone in a well on the Chase property. Joseph borrows the stone.
- April Joseph Sr. and Alvin are listed on south end of Stafford Road in Palmyra.
- June 29 Lot 1 valuation is still \$700 for 100 acres for Joseph Sr.
- July 2 Zachariah Seymour, the land agent from whom Joseph Sr. and Alvin articulated the 100 acres and to whom they made payments, dies.
- 1822** Joseph Jr. tells that by looking in Willard Chase's stone he can see hidden treasures, all things in caves, in and under the earth, and spirits in ancient dress in charge of the treasures.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK**1823**

- July 24 A \$300 assessment increase on land shows improvements on the Smiths' Manchester property.
- November The Smiths' frame house in Manchester commences to be built.
- November 19 Alvin Smith dies.

**September 1824
to Spring 1825**

Revival of religion commences with the Methodists, followed by the Baptists and Presbyterians, in the Palmyra vicinity. Joseph Jr. hears discourses by Reverend George Lane of the Methodist church and attends meetings.

1825

- Spring Lucy, Hyrum, Samuel Harrison, and Sophronia Smith join Palmyra's Presbyterian Church. Joseph Jr. is inclined toward the Methodist faith.
- October Joseph goes with his father to southern New York and near Harmony (now Oakland), Pennsylvania, to obtain money to pay off their Manchester farm;

they hunt for a gold/silver mine with a number of treasure seekers. At home of Isaac Hale Joseph Jr. meets Hale's daughter Emma. The treasure seeking company stays at Hale's home in November.

**October 1825 to
March 1826**

Joseph Jr. works for Josiah Stowell for five months and goes to school. He uses two stones to search for treasure and prays for help in the endeavor.

**NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK COUNTY, NEW YORK
1825**

December 20 Lemuel Durfee Sr. of Palmyra purchased the Smith Manchester farm for \$1,135.

**BAINBRIDGE, CHENANGO COUNTY, NEW YORK
1826**

March 20 During a court examination, State of New York vs Joseph Smith the Glass looker, before Justice Albert Neely, Joseph Jr. states that by looking at a stone he can discover treasures hidden in the bowels of the earth, gold mines, coined money, and lost property.

Fall Joseph Jr. works for Joseph Knight Sr. at Colesville, New York.

1827

January 18 Joseph Smith Jr. and Emma Hale are married at South Bainbridge, New York.

January Josiah Stowell takes Joseph and Emma to Manchester.

Peter Ingersoll moves Emma's furniture from Harmony, Pennsylvania, to Manchester. Joseph Jr. tells his father-in-law he has given up glass-looking.

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

March 10 Joseph Smith Jr. receives a receipt for credit of four dollars on Abraham Fish's account.

April 16 Samuel Harrison Smith begins to work for Lemuel Durfee, Sr., in payment for use of the house where the Smiths reside.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

June Joseph Smith Sr. tells Willard Chase that some years previous a spirit had appeared to his son Joseph Jr. and informed him about a book or record of gold.

August Joseph Jr. works two days mowing for Lemuel Durfee, Sr.

- September 20 Joseph Knight and Josiah Stowell visit the Smith home.
- September 22 Joseph Jr. visits a nearby hill taking Emma with him in Joseph Knight's wagon. He finds gold plates in a stone box and hides the plates in a fallen tree top. He also finds with the plates a sword, breastplate, and a pair of spectacles (later called Urim and Thummim). Joseph tells Joseph Knight the plates "appear to be Gold" and through the glasses or spectacles "I can see any thing."
- September Joseph Jr. goes to Macedon and works for Mrs. Wells.
- September/October Joseph Jr. takes the gold plates from the hiding spot in the fallen tree top and runs home with them. He tells Willard Chase that if it had not been for the stone, he would not have obtained the book. A group of treasure seekers begins looking for the plates. Lucy Smith mentions that Joseph hid the plates in a wood box which was smashed by people searching for the record.
- ca. October 1 The Martin Harris family hears about the gold plates from Lucy. Mrs. Harris and her daughter go to the Smith home. Martin talks to members of the Smith family and Joseph Jr. about how the book was found. Joseph says that an angel appeared to him and told him it was God's work and that he located the plates by looking in the stone found on the Chase property. The angel told him he must quit the company of the money-diggers, translate the plates, and publish them to the world. Martin responds, "If the Lord will show me that it is his work, you can have all the money you want."
- November/December Martin Harris gets Joseph Jr. out of debt and gives him \$50. Alva Hale comes from Harmony to pick up Joseph and Emma. Alva moves them to Harmony. The plates are placed in a barrel containing beans.
- Winter 1827-1828** Joseph Jr. tells his wife's neighbors about the gold plates.
- HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA**
1828
- ca. January Contents of the book are dictated by Joseph Jr. Scribes of Book of Lehi pages: Reuben Hale and Emma Hale Smith.
- ca. February Hyrum Smith and Martin Harris travel to Harmony to see Joseph Jr. Harris takes a set of characters copied from the gold plates to New York City. Visits Samuel L. Mitchell and Charles Anthon.
- April 12-
June 14 Martin Harris becomes a scribe and takes over one hundred manuscript pages home. At Palmyra he reads from the manuscript in the evenings to his family and some friends.

- June 15 A male child is born to Joseph and Emma but dies the same day at Harmony. Emma is near death.
- June/July Joseph Jr. travels to Manchester and learns that the manuscript is lost.
- July A revelation concerning the lost pages is given at Harmony (BC 2; LDS D&C 3; RLDS D&C 2). This is Joseph's first recorded revelation.

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

- ca. September Lucy Smith, Hyrum Smith, and Samuel Harrison Smith stopped attending Western Presbyterian Church of Palmyra.

HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

1829

- February Lucy and Joseph Sr. travel to Harmony. A revelation is received at Harmony (BC 3; LDS and RLDS D&C 4).
- March Martin Harris travels to Harmony and wants to know if Joseph Jr. "had, in his possession, the record of the Nephites." A revelation is received (BC 4; LDS and RLDS D&C 5). Harris returns to Palmyra. Isaac Hale describes the manner in which the record was dictated: a stone placed in a hat.
- April 5 Samuel Harrison Smith and Oliver Cowdery arrive at Harmony, Pennsylvania.
- April 7-May 31 Cowdery acts as a scribe to Joseph Jr. Seven revelations are given during April and May (BC 5-11; LDS D&C 6-12; RLDS D&C 3, 6-11). Dictation continues during the summer of 1829 at Harmony, Pennsylvania, and concludes at Fayette, New York, about July 1, 1829.
Scribes of original manuscript: major scribe Oliver Cowdery, also Samuel H. Smith, Emma Hale Smith, two unknown scribes (probably members of Whitmer family), plus Joseph Smith Jr.
- May 15 Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith ordain and baptize each other.
- May Samuel Harrison Smith baptized.

FAYETTE, SENECA COUNTY, NEW YORK

- June John Whitmer becomes a scribe. Joseph Jr. receives revelations for members of the Whitmer family (BC 12-14; LDS D&C 14-16; RLDS D&C 12-14); Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer called to choose twelve disciples or apostles also "instructions relative to building up the church of Christ" (BC 15; LDS D&C 18; RLDS D&C 16).

June 11 Joseph Jr. has deposited copyright for the Book of Mormon.

June 14 Oliver Cowdery writes to Hyrum Smith.

June Hyrum Smith, David Whitmer, Peter Whitmer and probably John Whitmer are baptized by Oliver Cowdery.
A revelation is received for Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris "previous to their viewing the plates containing the book of Mormon" (LDS D&C 17; RLDS D&C 15).

ca. July 1 About this time manuscript of the Book of Mormon completed.

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

June 26 Title page of the manuscript Book of Mormon is published in the *Wayne Sentinel*.

ROCHESTER, MONROE COUNTY, NEW YORK

Summer Martin Harris goes to Rochester, New York, to inquire about printing the Book of Mormon. He reports that Joseph found a gold bible and that "By placing the spectacles in a hat and looking into it, Smith interprets the characters into the English language."

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

August 25 Indenture is made between Martin Harris and Egbert Grandin on land and property for enough money (\$3,000) to print the Book of Mormon.

August 1829 to March 1830 The Book of Mormon is typeset and printed at Grandin's print shop. John Gilbert sets the type and receives manuscript pages from Hyrum Smith.

HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

October 4 Joseph Jr. arrives in Harmony and writes to Oliver Cowdery that he has bought a horse from Mr. Stowell and wants someone to come after it.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

November 6 Cowdery writes from Manchester that Harris will pick up the horse in two or three weeks.

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

November 9 Cowdery writes about Joseph Smith as author, inspired writer.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

December 28 Cowdery writes to Joseph Jr. from Manchester: "it may look rather strange to you to find that I have so soon become a printer."

1830

January 16 An agreement between Joseph Sr. and Martin Harris on selling the Book of Mormon is witnessed by Oliver Cowdery.

ca. January Joseph Jr. arrives from Harmony; revelation given to sell copyright in Providences in Canada; trip to Canada (not printed in BC or D&C).

PALMYRA, WAYNE COUNTY, NEW YORK

March 26 The *Wayne Sentinel* advertises the Book of Mormon available to purchase.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

March 26-31 Joseph Smith, Jr. arrives in Manchester with Joseph Knight, Sr.; a commandment is given for Martin Harris (JS Revelations, 48-50; LDS D&C 19; RLDS D&C 18).

April 6 Baptisms of Joseph Smith Sr., Martin Harris, Lucy Mack Smith and Sarah Rockwell in Crooked Brook. Revelations for Oliver Cowdery, Hyrum Smith, Samuel H. Smith, Joseph Smith Sr. and Joseph Knight Sr. are received (BC 17-22; LDS D&C 21, 23; RLDS D&C 19, 21). Oliver Cowdery is ordained an elder. Joseph Jr. is ordained an elder, also prophet and seer by Cowdery. Church of Christ organized.

FAYETTE, SENECA COUNTY, NEW YORK

April 11 At Fayette, New York, branch of the church is established. Cowdery delivers the first public discourse of the church and performs baptisms.

April 16 A revelation is received regarding individuals who have been baptized in other Christian churches (JS Revelations, 57-58; LDS D&C 22; RLDS D&C 20).

April 18 More baptisms are performed by Cowdery.

June 9 The first conference of the church is held; articles and covenants are presented (BC 24; LDS D&C 20; RLDS D&C 17). Baptisms are performed. Joseph Sr. and Hyrum Smith are ordained priests.

June Revelation of Moses to Joseph Smith
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 1-3; Joseph Smith dictating
Text: Moses 1; RLDS D&C 22
Scribe: Oliver Cowdery
Note: "A Revelation given to Joseph the Revelator June 1830" (1). No location mentioned.

ca. June Revision of Genesis started
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 3-10
Text: Genesis 1:1-4:18 (KJV); Moses 2:1-5:43; Gen. 1:1-5:28 (JST)
Scribe: Oliver Cowdery
Notes: "A Revelation given to the Elders of the Church of Christ On the first Book of Moses given to Joseph the Seer Chapter first" (3); "Chapter 2 A Revelation concerning Adam after he had been driven out of the garden of Eden" (8). No location mentioned.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

June 28 Joseph Sr. appears in Manchester before Justice Nathan Pierce on behalf of his son Hyrum.

COLESVILLE, BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

June 28 Baptisms are performed in Colesville, New York, but no confirmations. A Colesville branch is started.

SOUTH BAINBRIDGE, CHENANGO COUNTY, NEW YORK

July 1 Joseph Jr. is brought before Justice Joseph Chamberlain in South Bainbridge, New York.

COLESVILLE, BROOME COUNTY, NEW YORK

ca. July Joseph Jr. is arrested upon warrant and appears before Justice Joel K. Noble in Colesville.

HARMONY, SUSQUEHANNA COUNTY, PENNSYLVANIA

July 4-31 Revelations received, including one for Emma Smith (BC 25-27; LDS D&C 24-26; RLDS D&C 23-25).

September 4 A revelation is recorded concerning sacrament (BC 28; LDS D&C 27; RLDS D&C 26).

FAYETTE, SENECA CO., NEW YORK

September 5-26 Revelations are given to the church at Fayette and others (BC 29-34; LDS D&C 28-31; RLDS D&C 27-30).

September 26 The second conference of the church commences; total membership is sixty-two.

MANCHESTER, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

October 17 In Manchester a missionary covenant to preach to Native Americans (Lamanites) is issued.

FAYETTE, SENECA COUNTY, NEW YORK

- October 18-31 In Fayette a revelation to Ezra Thayer and Northrop Sweet is given (BC 35; LDS D&C 33; RLDS D&C 32).
- October 21 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 10
Text: Gen. 4:18-24 (KJV); Moses 5:43-51; Gen. 5:29-37 (JST)
Scribe: John Whitmer
Note: "October 21st 1830" (10).
- November 4 Orson Pratt arrives in Fayette; Joseph Jr. asks and receives a revelation for him (BC 36; LDS D&C 34; RLDS D&C 33) by gazing at a stone placed in a hat.
- November 30 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 10-11
Text: Gen. 4:25-5:11 (KJV); Moses 5:52-6:18; Gen. 5:38-6:16 (JST)
Scribe: John Whitmer
Note: "November 30th 1830" (10).
- December 1 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 11-13
Text: Gen. 5:12-21 (KJV); Moses 6:19-52; Gen. 6:17-53 (JST)
Scribe: Emma Smith
Note: "Dec 1st" (p. 11).
- ca December 2-11 Addition not in Gen. (KJV)
Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 14-15
Text: Moses 6:52-7:1; Gen. 6:53-7:1 (JST)
Scribe: John Whitmer
- December 7-11 Revelation instructing Sidney Rigdon to write for Joseph Smith -- "And the scriptures shall be given even as they are in mine own bosom, to the salvation of mine own elect" (JS Revelations, 87; LDS D&C 35:20; RLDS D&C 34:5).
- December 11-15 Revelation is given for Edward Partridge (BC 38; LDS D&C 36; RLDS D&C 35).
- ca. December 11-30 Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 15-20
Gen. 5:22-32 (KJV); Moses 7:2-8:12; Gen. 7:2-85 (JST)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

CANANDAIGUA, ONTARIO COUNTY, NEW YORK

- December 30 In Canandaigua, New York, a revelation to Joseph Jr. and Sidney Rigdon instructs them to go to Ohio (BC 39; LDS and RLDS D&C 37).

FAYETTE, SENECA CO., NEW YORK

1831

January 2 The third conference of the church takes place in Fayette; revelation is received (BC 40; LDS and RLDS D&C 38).

January 5-6 Two revelations concerning James Covell, a Methodist minister, are given (BC 41-42; LDS and RLDS D&C 39-40).

KIRTLAND, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

February 4 First revelation received at Kirtland. Edward Partridge called as church bishop.

February 9 Laws of the church given (JS Revelations, 95-98; LDS and RLDS D&C 42).

ca. 9 February 9-

March 6-7

Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 20-49

Text: Gen. 6:1-19:29 (KJV); Moses 8:13-30; Gen. 8:1-19:35 (JST)

Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

March 6-7

Prophecy mentions that Joseph Smith may now translate the New Testament (JS Revelations, 109; LDS D&C 45:61 and RLDS D&C 45:11).

March 8-

April 4

Revision of Matthew started

Manuscript: NT 1 (Dictated MS), 1-21; Joseph Smith dictating

Text: Matt. 1:1-9:1 (KJV)

Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

Note: "March 8th 1831 A Translation of the New Testament translated by the power of God" (1).

March 8

Revelation for John Whitmer to keep a regular history and assist in transcribing (JS Revelations, 112; LDS and RLDS D&C 47).

ca. March 8-

April 4

Revelation of Moses; Gen. 1:1-19:29 (KJV); Moses 1:1-8:30; RLDS D&C 22; Gen. 1:1-19:35 (JST) from OT 1 (1-49) copied by John Whitmer upon OT 2 (1-49).

ca. April 4

Manuscript: OT 1 (Dictated MS), 49-61

Text: Gen. 19:29-24:41 (KJV); Gen. 19:35-24:42 (JST)

Scribe: Sidney Rigdon

Note: "April 5th 1831 transcribed thus far" (61).

ca. April 5

Gen. 19:29-24:41 (KJV); Gen. 19:35-24:42 (JST) from OT 1 (49-61) copied by John Whitmer upon OT 2 (49-59).

April 4-7 Matt. 1:1-9:1 (KJV) from NT 1 (1-21) copied by John Whitmer as NT 2, f. 1 (1-16).
Notes: "Kirtland Geauga Ohio April 4th 1831 A Translation of the New Testament by Joseph Smith Jr." (NT 2, f. 1, 1); NT 2 has four folios; f. 1 (1-49); with sequential page numbers in f. 2-4 (1-154).

ca. April 7-
June 19 Manuscript: NT 1 (Dictated MS), 21-63
Text: Matt. 9:2-26:71 (KJV)
Scribe: Sidney Rigdon
Note: "Thus far Transcribed April 7th 1831" (21).

ca. June-August Matthew 9:2-26:1 from NT 1 (21-59) copied as NT 2, f. 1 (16-49) by John Whitmer.

ca. 19 June 19-
August 27 Trip to Independence, Missouri.

HIRAM, PORTAGE COUNTY, OHIO

ca. September 26-
October 11 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 2 (Dictated MS), 1-24
Text: Matt. 26:1-71 revised again; Matt. 26:71-28:20; Mark 1:1-9:1 (KJV)
Scribe: John Whitmer
Note: "September 26th 1831" (NT 2, f. 2, 1)

ca. October 11-
February 16, 1832 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 2 (Dictated MS) 24 through f. 4 (Dictated MS), 114
Text: Mark 9:2-16:20; Luke 1:1-24:53; John 1:1-5:37 (KJV) Scribe: Sidney Rigdon. Note: No date on manuscript. Text is written out in full.

1832

AMHERST, LORAIN COUNTY, OHIO

January 25, 1832 Joseph Smith ordained President of the High Priesthood by Sidney Rigdon.

HIRAM, PORTAGE COUNTY, OHIO

February 16 Vision of three degrees of glories received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon during revision of John 5:29 (JS Revelations, 161-65; LDS and RLDS D&C 76).

ca. February 16-
March 20 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 4 (Dictated MS), 114-152
Text: John 5:37-21:25; Acts 1 through Rev. 11 (KJV)
Scribes: Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause
Note: No date on manuscript. Writing of complete text discontinued on NT 2. Only changes recorded on manuscript pages. Markings in JS Bible correspond with revision of NT starting at John 6. This is known as the short method.

- March 25 Assault on Joseph Smith Jr. and Sidney Rigdon, Hiram, Ohio (Lost Apostles, 21).
- ca. April 1-June 20 Trip to Missouri
- ca. July 8 Sidney Rigdon's license taken away.
- July 20 Frederick G. Williams starts as scribe for Joseph Smith.
- ca. July 20-31 Manuscript: NT 2, f. 4 (Dictated MS), 152-54.
Text: Rev. 12-22 (KJV)
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
- July 31 Finished revision of New Testament.
- ca. July 31 -
September 12 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 59-73
Text: About Gen. 24:41-50:26; Exodus-Deuteronomy (KJV)
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
Notes: No date on manuscript. Markings in JS Bible correspond with revision of OT starting at Gen. 25.
- KIRTLAND, GEAUGA CO., OHIO**
- September 22-23 Revelation concerning the city New Jerusalem and the two priesthoods, mentions priesthood of OT Moses and Aaron. (JS Revelations, 182-86; LDS D&C 84; RLDS D&C 83).
- ca. October 1 -
November 6 Trip to Albany, New York City, and Boston.
- November 6 Joseph Smith III born.
- ca. November 7-27 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 73-81
Text: About Joshua through Nehemiah 10
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
Note: No date on manuscript.
- ca. November 27 Account of Joseph Smith's early visionary experiences are recorded by Frederick G. Williams and Joseph Smith in Letterbook 1. Also the Kirtland Revelations Book started.
- November 27 Letter to Independence, Missouri, copied into Joseph Smith Letterbook 1 refers to Ezra 2:61-62 (Joseph Smith Revelations, 220; LDS D&C 85:12). Joseph Smith starts his first journal.

- ca. November 27-
December 5 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS) 81-83
Text: Nehemiah 11-13; Esther, all chapters correct; Job, Psalms 1-10
Written by Joseph Smith
- Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 83-86
Text: Psalm 11-15
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 86
Text: Psalm 16
Written by Joseph Smith
- December 1 Joseph Smith “wrote and corrected revelations” in Kirtland Revelations Book.
- ca. December 3 Kirtland Council Minute Book started.
- December 5 Joseph Smith copies “letters and translating.”
- ca. December 5-6 Review of Matt. 1-13 on NT 2. Additional revisions written as notes. The notes were pinned onto the appropriate manuscript page.
- December 6 Revelation as an explanation of the parable of the wheat and tares in Matt. 13 (Joseph Smith Revelations, 220-21; LDS D&C 86; RLDS D&C 84).
- ca. December 6-31-
ca. Jan. 1833 Review of Matt. 14 through about John 21 on NT 2.
Additional revisions on notes pinned to manuscript pages. One pinned note written by Joseph Smith.
- December 27-28 Revelation for the first elders, mentions another comforter recorded in testimony of John (JS Revelations, 191; LDS D&C 88:3; RLDS D&C 85:1).
- 1833**
- ca. January-
February 2 Review about Acts 1 through Revelation 22 on NT 2. Pinned notes written by Frederick G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon.
- February 2 Completed translation and review of New Testament.
- ca. February 2-
May 6 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 86-111
Text: About Psalm 17 to about Isaiah.
Scribe: Frederick G. Williams
Notes: “The Songs of Solomon are not Inspired writings” (97). No date on manuscript.

- March 8 Commandment including instructions “when you have finished translation of th[e] prophets” to preside over the church and school (JS Revelations, 201; LDS D&C 90:13; RLDS D&C 87:5).
- March 9 Revelation on Apocrypha, between OT & NT in JS Bible, “mostly translated correct” (JS Revelations, 202; LDS D&C 91; RLDS D&C 88).
- May 6 Revelation with instructions to hasten to translate scriptures (Joseph Smith Revelations, 204; LDS D&C 93:53; RLDS D&C 90:12).
- ca. May 6-
July 2 Manuscript: OT 2 (Dictated MS), 111-19
Text: About Jeremiah through Malachi
Scribes: Frederick G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon
Notes: “Finished on the 2d day of July 1833” (119). Lamentations, Obadiah, Micah, Nahum, Habakuk, Zephariah, Haggai, and Malachi considered correct.
- July 17 Review of revelation of Moses and revision of Gen. 1:1-11:17; classifying different subjects and review by church presidency on OT 2 (1-34). An index was prepared that included references to the scriptures on the order of the High Priesthood, the Priesthood after the order of Aaron, the Sabbath day, baptism, repentance, and covenants was made. The index pages are scattered in the Joseph Smith Letterbook 1, Joseph Smith Journal 1835-36 and the 1839 draft of the Manuscript History.
- July 20 *The Evening and the Morning Star* printing press destroyed at Independence, Missouri
- October 5-
November 4 Trip to Canada
- 1834**
- February 26-
March 28 Trip to New York to obtain volunteers for Zion’s Camp.
- May 5-August 1 Trip with Camp of Israel (Zion’s Camp) to Missouri.
- ca. October 16-30 Trip to Michigan
- PAINESVILLE, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO**
- November *Mormonism Unveiled* published by E. D. Howe. Publishes affidavits collected in Palmyra and Manchester, New York. Reprints affidavits from Harmony, Pennsylvania area and letters of Ezra Booth. Includes examination

of Book of Mormon text. Proposes Solomon Spaulding theory of origin of Book of Mormon text.

KIRTLAND, GEAUGA COUNTY, OHIO

- 1835** Corrections made to the Dictated Manuscript of Genesis 3-5 (OT 1, 7-19). This includes changes in ages of early Old Testament patriarchs made on OT 1, 11-12, 19. No date mentioned.
- February 14 Twelve Apostles chosen by Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris (Lost Apostles, 80); Lyman E. Johnson, Heber C. Kimball, and Brigham Young ordained apostles, Kirtland (Lost Apostles, 82)
- February 15 John F. Boynton, Orson Hyde, Luke Johnson, William E. McLellin, David W. Patten, and William Smith received their ordination as apostles (Lost Apostles, 82)
- February 21 Parley P. Pratt ordained an apostle (Lost Apostles, 82)
- April 26 Thomas B. Marsh and Orson Pratt ordained apostles (Lost Apostles, 82-83)
- April 28-30 Instructions concerning two priesthoods in the church (JS Revelations, 226-31; LDS D&C 107; RLDS D&C 104).
- May 4 Apostles leave on their first apostolic mission to the eastern states (Lost Apostles, 84, 87)
- June 15 Letter soliciting funds to print New Translation.
- June 30 Michael H. Chandler arrives in Kirtland with four Egyptian mummies and some Egyptian papyri.
- July 7 Joseph Smith Jr. receives a certificate from Chandler. The four Egyptian mummies and the Egyptian papyri are purchased for \$2,400.
- ca. July 7-31 Manuscripts and bound book of Egyptian Alphabet started.
Scribes for manuscripts: Joseph Smith Jr., Oliver Cowdery and W.W. Phelps.
Notes: Three separate working papers are produced. Final recording done by Phelps in bound Egyptian Alphabet.
Alphabet divided into five degrees. Handwriting on 34 pages.
Scribes for alphabet: W.W. Phelps and Warren Parrish

ca. July 15-23- August	Trip to Michigan.
August 17	General Assembly, Doctrine and Covenants canonized (Lost Apostles, 86-87).
ca. August 17 – September 12	Doctrine and Covenants printed and some copies bound.
ca. September 22	Joseph Smith’s second journal started.
October 1, 7	Work on Egyptian Alphabet continued.
October 29	Warren Parrish appointed a scribe.
November 3	Revelation says Quorum of Apostles under condemnation (Lost Apostles, 101)
November 14	Revelation for Warren Parrish (Joseph Smith Revelations, 276).
November 20	Hebrew books and Greek Lexicon obtained from New York.
November 21	Joseph Smith Jr. studies Hebrew alphabet.
November 19-20, 24-25	Manuscripts: Book of Abraham Translation manuscripts; three separate manuscripts Text: Abraham 1:1-2:18 Scribes: W.W. Phelps, Frederick G. Williams, Warren Parrish. Parrish copies text onto longer manuscript Notes: Williams and Parrish took down dictation at the same time; Compare Genesis 11:28-29; 12:1-6 (KJV).
December 16	William Smith injures Joseph Smith Jr. (Lost Apostles, 101)
December 23	Joseph Smith Jr. Studies Greek.
1836	
January 26	Hebrew school starts, Professor Joshua Seixas to teach class.
ca. March	<i>A Collection of Sacred Hymns</i> published.
March 27	House of the Lord (Kirtland Temple) is dedicated (Lost Apostles, 107-108).
March 30	Received certificate from Professor Seixas on knowledge of Hebrew.

- ca. July 25-
September 15 Trip to New York City and Salem, Massachusetts. Revelation received at Salem (LDS D&C 111).
- 1837**
- ca. January-March Second Edition of the Book of Mormon published.
- January 9 Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company opens and begins circulation of notes.
- April 9 Joseph Smith spoke of judgment on “characters that professed to be his friends & friends to humanity” but had “turned tr[a]itors & opposed the Currency” (Lost Apostles, 140).
- May 23 Parley P. Pratt writes letter of protest to Joseph Smith about temporal management and Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon leading people astray (Lost Apostles, 141).
- May 29 Charges against Joseph Smith Jr. by Lyman Johnson and Orson Pratt; also charges against Joseph Smith Sr. by Luke Johnson (Lost Apostles, 142).
- June Joseph Smith withdraws from Safety Society; apostles Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde leave on their mission to England (Lost Apostles, 144); quorum president Thomas B. Marsh was in Missouri at the time and was not aware of the opening of the English mission (Lost Apostles, 113).
- July 3 Ground broken for building a House of the Lord in Far West, Missouri.
- July Marsh and David Patten rush to Kirtland where both resolve difficulties with and become committed to defending Joseph Smith. Marsh works to resolve problems within the quorum (Lost Apostles, 113-14).
- July 23 Revelation (LDS D&C 112: RLDS D&C 105) for Thomas B. Marsh and the Twelve received at Kirtland which specified Marsh’s exalted standing with the Lord and Joseph Smith (Lost Apostles, 114-15)
- ca. July 28 -
August 30 Trip to Canada.
- September 3 Conference held, Luke and Lyman Johnson, and John Boynton not sustained as apostles (Lost Apostles, 151).

- September 4 Joseph Smith sends a message to the church in Missouri with Thomas Marsh indicating David and John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery, and W. W. Phelps are in transgression. It stated they may lose their standing in the church if they did not repent (Lost Apostles, 152).
- September 11 Luke and Lyman Johnson and John Boynton received back into full fellowship after acknowledging their faults (Lost Apostles, 152).
- by Sept. 17 Oliver Cowdery leaves for Missouri.
- September 27 Joseph Smith leaves for visit to northern Missouri.
- October 20 Oliver Cowdery arrives at Far West.
- December 10 Joseph Smith returns from Far West where he held meetings in November. While absent from Kirtland a group of dissenters renounced the Church of Latter Day Saints, and claimed to be the original Church of Christ (Lost Apostles, 156)
- December 22 Brigham Young is driven from Kirtland.
- Dec. 24-30 Twenty-eight individuals excommunicated from the church, including Cyrus Smalling, Joseph Coe, Martin Harris, Luke Johnson, John Boynton, and Warren Parrish (Lost Apostles, 158)
- 1838**
- January 12 Revelation for First Presidency to move west, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon flee Kirtland in the evening for Far West, Missouri (Lost Apostles, 158).
- FAR WEST, CALDWELL COUNTY, MISSOURI**
- March 10 John Whitmer, church historian and witness, excommunicated by the High Council presided over by apostles Thomas Marsh and David Patten. (Lost Apostles, 167).
- March 14 Joseph Smith Jr. and family arrive at Far West. He approves of the disciplinary actions.

- April 12 Oliver Cowdery withdraws from the church, is tried and excommunicated by Bishop Edward Partridge presiding over the High Council (Lost Apostles, 168). George W. Robinson starts recording in Scriptorium Book.
- April 26 Revelation on name of the church specified and the House of the Lord to be built at Far West (LDS D&C 115).
- April 27 Draft of Manuscript History started; early pages not extant.
- June Danites organized under the leadership of Jared Carter. A letter credited to Sidney Rigdon, warned Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, William W. Phelps and Lyman E. Johnson to leave Far West. It was signed by Sampson Avard, Hyrum Smith and eighty-one other individuals (Lost Apostles, 177-79).
- June 17 Sidney Rigdon delivers Salt Sermon to frighten the dissenters from Far West (Lost Apostles, 176-77).
- June 19 John Whitmer leaves Far West.
- June 17 Sidney Rigdon delivers Salt Sermon to frighten the dissenters from Far West (Lost Apostles, 176-77).
- July 4 Dedication of site for House of the Lord and laying of cornerstones; Sidney Rigdon delivers a militant oration for the Mormons to defend themselves against Gentile infringements. Thomas Marsh and others felt they were being singled out for public ridicule for their passiveness (Lost Apostles, 186-87).
- August 6 Election-day battle at Gallatin, Missouri (Lost Apostles, 183-84).
- October 10 Surrender of the Mormon community at DeWitt in Carol County; non-Mormon militias turn their attention to Mormons in Daviess and Caldwell counties (Lost Apostles, 185-86).
- October 18 Responding to Gentile infringements, Mormons sacked Gallatin and Millport (Lost Apostles, 187).

- October 24 Thomas B. Marsh signs affidavit at Richmond against activities of the Mormons, Orson Hyde attests to the truth of Marsh's statement (Lost Apostles, 187-88, 292-93).
- October 27 Extermination order issued by Missouri Governor Lilburn W. Boggs (Lost Apostles, 190).
- October 30 Hawn's Mill massacre (Lost Apostles, 190)
- October 31 Surrenders to Missouri militia.
- Nov. 12-29 Court of Inquiry before Fifth Circuit Judge Austin A. King in Richmond, at Ray County courthouse; Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon and other become prisoners of the state because of the testimony given at the hearing.
- November 30 Joseph Smith Jr. and others transferred to Liberty Jail, Liberty, Missouri.

1839

LIBERTY, CLAY COUNTY, MISSOURI

- March 17 Thomas B. Marsh excommunication, Quincy, Illinois (Lost Apostles, 194).
- March 20 Liberty Jail Epistle (JS Revelations, 249-53; LDS D&C 121-23). Mentions plural gods.
- June 27 Orson Hyde readmitted into Quorum of Twelve (Lost Apostles, 195).

October 29-

March 4, 1840 Trip to Washington, D.C., Philadelphia, New Jersey.

NAUVOO, HANCOCK CO., ILLINOIS

1840

ca. September 13-14 Hyrum Smith ordained church patriarch by his father Joseph Smith, Sr.

1841

January 19 Revelation concerning writing a proclamation to the kings of the earth, building a temple, and a boarding house in Nauvoo, also the organization of the priesthood quorums. William Law instructed to publish the new translation (JS Revelations, 259; LDS D&C 124:89).

- April 6 Cornerstones of Nauvoo Temple laid.
- 1842**
- March 1 Publication of Facsimile No. 1 from the Book of Abraham and the Book of Abraham in issue of *Times and Seasons*
 Heading: A TRANSLATION Of some ancient Records that have fallen into our hands, from the Catecombs [*sic*] of Egypt, purporting to be the writings of Abraham, while he was in Egypt, called the BOOK OF ABRAHAM, written by his own hand, upon papyrus.
 Text: Abraham 1:1-2:18; Facsimile 1, Figures 1-12..
 Scribe: Willard Richards wrote a Printer's manuscript.
 Notes: Compare text with Genesis 11:28-29; 12:1-6 (KJV).
- Publication of Wentworth letter.
- March 8-9 Book of Abraham dictated
 Text: Abraham 2:19-5:21.
 Notes: Compare text with Genesis 12:7-13 and Genesis 1:1-2:1-10, 15-25 (KJV).
- March 15 Publication of Book of Abraham and Facsimile No. 2 from the Book of Abraham in issue of *Times and Seasons*
 Text: Abraham 2:19-5:21; Facsimile 2, Figures 1-23.
- Publication starts on the History of Joseph Smith.
- March 15-16 Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon join Nauvoo Masonic Lodge.
- March 17 Female Relief Society of Nauvoo organized.
- May 4-5 Higher priesthood ordinances introduced (endowment ceremony).
- May 16 Publication of Facsimile No. 3 from the Book of Abraham in issue of *Times and Seasons*.
 Text: Facsimile 3, figures 1-6.
- May 17 John C. Bennett resigns as mayor and also church membership.
- June 18 John C. Bennett excommunicated.
- July 27 Revelation for Sarah Ann Whitney to be a wife of Joseph Smith (JS Revelations, 265-66).

1843

- February 3 Joseph Smith studies German.
- May 1 Kinderhook plates examined.
- May 26 Endowment ceremony commenced anew.
- July 12 Revelation concerning biblical men having wives and concubines, adultery, a commandment for Emma Smith, the law of the priesthood (JS Revelations, 272-76; LDS D&C 132).
- 28 September Second anointing ceremony introduced.

1844

- March 10-11 Kingdom of God/Council of Fifty organized.
- March 14 Revelation on name of the Kingdom of God.
- April 7 Joseph Smith preaches King Follett Discourse at general conference.
- April 11 Joseph Smith anointed King of the Kingdom of God/Council of Fifty.
- April 25 Revelation on Constitution of the Council of Fifty.
- June 7 *Nauvoo Expositor* published.
- June 10 *Nauvoo Expositor* printing press destroyed.

CARTHAGE, HANCOCK CO., ILLINOIS

- June 27 Joseph and Hyrum Smith are murdered, Carthage Jail, Carthage, Illinois (LDS D&C 135).

Thoughts about Joseph Smith

Excerpts from *The Rise of Mormonism: 1816-1844* (2020 Edition):

it appears to me that Joseph Smith was motivated by a desire to present his experiences as a basis for others to obtain faith. Story telling became a way of life for him as he was able to explain to family and friends what was most dear to his heart. (iii)

This belief in visions and dreams formed a significant part of the Smith family's religious life. (27)

He [Joseph Smith Jr.] begins his narration by pointing out that his parents "spared no pains to instructing me in <the> christian religion." He then described his youthful religious questing: At about the age of twelve years my mind become seriously imprest [impressed] with regard to the all important [important] concerns for the welfare of my immortal Soul, which led me to searching the scriptures, believing as I was taught, that they contained the word of God. Thus applying myself to them and my intimate acquaintance with those of differant denominations led me to marvel exce[e]dingly, for I discovered that <they did not> adorn their profession by a holy walk and Godly conversation agreeable to what I found contained in that sacred depository, this was a grief to my Soul. Thus from the age of twelve years to fifteen I pondered many things in my heart . . . my mind become exce[e]dingly distressed for I become convicted of my sins and by searching the scriptures I found that <mankind> did not come unto the Lord but that they had apostatised from the true and liveing faith and there was no society or denomination that built upon the gospel of Jesus Christ as recorded in the new testament. (32)

Joseph would have been eighteen years old when he heard [Rev. George] Lane preaching. (35)

From what we can learn about the religious background of the Smith family, Joseph Jr.'s parents taught religious values to their children. Though his father did not regularly attend church, he did sing and pray with his family. Joseph's religious instruction included hearing minister's sermons, revival homilies, private family worship, and personal Bible study. Joseph was not uninformed, ignorant, or illiterate. While the Smith family held Christian beliefs, they also believed in treasures supernaturally buried in the earth which could be obtained only through magical rituals. (36)

young Smith had for several years earned part of his livelihood by hiring out as a glass looker to locate hidden treasures by gazing into his seer stone. It is also evident that Joseph surrounded his activities with a religious atmosphere flavored with the supernatural, although he himself at this time made no profession of religion. (51)

early adherents of the Mormon faith claim that Joseph located the gold plates from which he dictated the Book of Mormon by gazing into his seer stone. He also used this stone to obtain the text of the book as well as to receive instructions from God for his early followers. (51)

In contrast to the account which was later told, the earliest versions linked the finding of the plates with the practice of searching for buried treasure. They also linked obtaining the plates with magical rituals traditionally associated with winning treasure from its guardian spirits. (54)

Joseph told the family about the plates and asked them not to discuss what he said outside their family. She [Lucy Mack Smith] then describes how in the evenings the Smith family would meet and listen to Joseph's religious teachings. They also heard Joseph tell stories of the continent's former civilizations. (60)

Surviving accounts of the translation process suggest that Smith worked without directly using the plates—this despite all of the difficulty in obtaining, hiding, and bringing the plates along. (68)

Many aspects of the story told in New York and Pennsylvania were later revised. This included Joseph Smith's looking into the stone and seeing that he should bring Emma Hale to the hill, and especially details that linked the gold plates and treasure hunting. (71)

The early story as Joseph Smith related was important since it established the belief that he had a record. His immediate family was also essential to him as they were among the first to believe him. (71)

Smith would dictate the contents of the gold plates without the plates being in his presence. The claim of having plates with ancient writing on them was to increase faith. It was not necessary for Joseph Smith to use plates to produce the story that was represented to be contained on them. To assist others in having religious faith in Jesus Christ was the overriding purpose in telling about plates. Some would believe by having a vision of the plates while others did not need to have such experience. For Smith the struggles and experiences he related necessitated maintaining that the writings of native peoples were from an ancient record whether or not he physically had them in his possession. The story contained on the record was presented to Joseph Smith in the form of revelation. (93)

Joseph Smith had had a keen interest in religious teachings for the last ten years. He was a married man twenty-two years old. He had been talking to his family about obtaining a special record for the last four years. Smith could dictate about three pages a day and produce a lengthy manuscript. For the period from October 1828 to March 1829, before Cowdery became a scribe, it would be possible to have written many pages. With three scribes helping, the only drawback would be if there were not enough paper to write on (a shortage that did occur, according to Joseph Knight Sr.) or not having a scribe available, and if this was the case Smith could do his own writing.

Joseph Smith continued to dictate the text of the Book of Mormon with Oliver Cowdery as scribe. Smith, for example, worked on what is known as the Sermon on the Mount preached by Jesus and printed in the King James Bible. A comparison with the text in the Book of Mormon shows that Joseph documented the visit of Jesus to a New World people using the New Testament Gospel of Matthew. (98)

When Joseph Smith was in the process of dictating the religious text of the Book of Mormon, he would at times read longer passages from the Old Testament to his scribe. A close examination indicates that chapters from Old Testament books were incorporated into the Book of Mormon. In these places, Smith was dependent upon the Bible with the meaning essentially the same. (120-21)

A more plausible explanation is that Joseph Smith copied these words from the King James Bible, in ignorance of the textual history, rather than having been spoken by Jesus in the New World. This then would be but another example of the late textual material anachronistically placed into an earlier time-frame in Third Nephi. (127)

These prayers of Jesus in Third Nephi seem clearly to be based upon the Gospel of John. The Jesus presented in Third Nephi is not unique to the Third Nephi text but is taken right out of the

New Testament, even down to borrowing the gospel writers' words and phrases. This use of John evidences still another example of textual borrowing in the Third Nephi account. (131)

The clear conclusion of this examination is that the King James Version of the New Testament text was used extensively in the composition of Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon. The Sermon on the Mount given by Jesus during his ministry in the Old World was used to flesh out the idea that Christ had appeared to the ancient inhabitants of America. Other teachings of Jesus were adapted from different texts in the New Testament to provide content for an appearance of Jesus during the three-day period that Third Nephi claims for the visitation of the resurrected Jesus.

This documentation of extensive textual borrowing from the New Testament writings indicates a serious problem in accepting Third Nephi as an accurate account. If Jesus appeared in the New World as the Book of Mormon would have us believe, then the textual problems it contains would lead to the conclusion that it is not an accurate record of that event. (133)

The March 1829 revelation to Harris said of Joseph Smith, "He has a gift to translate the book, and I have commanded him that he shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant him no other gift." Smith's only gift was to translate the Book of Mormon. Like the previous examples, this restriction was made part of the Book of Mormon text (144)

The story of the gold plates was the vehicle that Joseph Smith used as a minister to preach his new emphasis on Jesus. Smith taught that at one time he had in his possession an ancient record of peoples who lived on the American continent more than fifteenth hundred years earlier. Believers had faith that Smith was able to recover a record or set of gold plates. The purpose of Smith's story was to make men and women believe as strongly as gold in his role as God's minister of salvation. Whether Smith had visions about the gold plates, whether he at one time had them in his possession, or whether anyone saw the physical plates was not important in what he was trying to accomplish. The message of the Book of Mormon, through the use of metal plates, was for others to believe in the Jesus who spoke to Native Americans and who was speaking at the time to Joseph Smith. (145)

One of the ideas relating to the text of the Book of Mormon is saying that it is impossible for Joseph Smith to have written the book since he was unlearned at the time. This is not an accurate assessment of the education of the young prophet. Learning in the Smith home included Bible reading in addition to family and individual prayer. Lucy Mack Smith was an important influence on her family as they conducted family worship. Joseph Sr. led the family in singing and prayer as the head of the household. His experience as a school teacher would help as he instructed especially the male children in transacting farm business.

It should be remembered that Joseph Smith received additional schooling when he was twenty years old. The narratives in the Book of Mormon are based upon how religion was reportedly practiced in ancient America. What is taught in the record is an indication of how Smith as a religious seer perceived the way the ancestors of Native Americans preached and battled. With the KJV Bible as his standard source text, Joseph Smith projected his own religious beliefs into the Book of Mormon. This is an important clue to its authenticity as a nineteenth-century work. It is what would be expected in a new book. (146)

In the early years of his life, Smith was a treasure seer who divined where precious things were hidden. As he acquired a prophetic mantle, he used the same methods, including seer-stone gazing, to produce his church's foundational scripture, the Book of Mormon, and his first fifteen revelations. (191)

While Smith did not comment on the manner in which he perceived God's mind, the linguistic idiosyncrasies are his own. Whether he believed that the ideas or the words themselves were God's is not completely known. Expressions that are borrowed from the King James Version (KJV) of the Bible seem to highlight the importance of the message.

Joseph Smith frequently revised the revelations in accordance with his developing theology. God's word, relayed through fallible prophets, was neither inerrant nor static in Smith's view—so as the need arose, he revised the Bible and his own autobiography as well as the revelations. (191)

Individual followers of Joseph Smith's revelations believe them to be God's word but are often ignorant of the original text. The originals are not only generally the most authentic and uncontaminated, but they also best represent the milieu of and open a window on human consciousness for that particular time and place. Yet so little thought is given today to the original texts because, in part, they are assumed to have been unchanged. They are considered sacrosanct—beyond scholarship. If church leaders made changes, they must have had good reason. (194)

The changes in many of the revelations reflected later theology, modifications in church government, recognition of former discrepancies, and sensitivity to criticism engendered by the originals. (201)

The belief of Joseph Smith was that the gospel of Jesus Christ contained in the New Testament consisted of the same essential beliefs and ordinances practiced since the beginning of humankind. The sacred texts revealed through Joseph Smith explained that if it was necessary to believe in Jesus now, then Adam and other Old Testament patriarchs would have believed like the followers of Jesus in New Testament times. The same idea goes with the practice of the ordinances of Christian baptism, confirmation, and priesthood ordination. (224)

The revision made by Joseph Smith attempts to make the wording of the KJV English clearer. The additions by Smith are a reflection of his encounter with the text in the context of revelatory messages as the latter-day gospel was being restored in 1830-33. Smith's revision of the Bible was produced as a church text for those who accept the restored gospel.

Since Joseph Smith did not have knowledge of Hebrew or Greek during this period of Bible revision, we should not expect his revision to contain readings in ancient biblical manuscripts. Nor should we think that his revision is any kind of restoration of what was in the Hebrew Scriptures or in the Greek New Testament. Joseph Smith's work is a revision rather than a translation, since church members knew that Joseph Smith had not studied Hebrew or Greek to produce his manuscript. But church members also thought that Joseph did not have to know Hebrew or Greek because he got his corrections via revelation. (225)

The majority of Christian concepts and ordinances added to the Old Testament of the Hebrew Scriptures occur in the first seventeen chapters of Genesis. This stops after chapter 17 and with no Christian material used for the remainder of Genesis or the rest of the Old Testaments with one exception. There is a brief mention of Christ in Isaiah 29:16 (JST). (227)

Joseph Smith perceived that the text he supplied would give a broader view of the teachings of Jesus. It appears that Smith himself intended his revision to be for the most part an accurate form of the original meaning of the text and perceived it as such. On March 8 Joseph Smith dictated to his scribe Sidney Rigdon the beginning of the gospel according to Matthew. The heading of the manuscript read: "A Translation of the New Testament translated by the power of God."

Like the Book of Mormon which was revealed "by the gift and power of God," the New Testament revision was a revealed text based upon the KJV Bible. Usually when working with the New Testament a person would use a standard text. In the case of revising Matthew 5 Smith used the KJV Bible and Third Nephi in the Book of Mormon.

Joseph Smith would read from the Bible purchased by Oliver Cowdery in 1829. Besides the Book of Mormon, Smith's work on the Bible was his next largest project. (229)

The idea that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery would develop the story of the visions of heavenly personages appearing to them is in line with other early embellishments. Examples of historical development of texts, location, name, and documents are as follows: (1) *Evening and Morning Star* reprint in Kirtland, with Oliver Cowdery as editor; (2) the change in the name of the church and the place it was organized; (3) significant revisions in some of the sacred texts of Joseph Smith's revelations permitted by the four members of Presidency for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants; and (4) the expansion of blessings given in December 1833 and their recording in the fall of 1835. (260)

Joseph Smith did not understand Egyptian, so he could not actually translate from that language. The symbols inspired him with ideas. He represented the text produced as an inspired revelatory interpretation (translation). The saints knew Joseph Smith had no knowledge of Egyptian and that the contents of the papyrus would have to be revealed by God. (271)

While dictating the Book of Abraham (what is now chapter 2) Joseph Smith used the KJV Genesis as a guide and text for part of his story. The actual wording in the story suggests the use of Genesis in composing this work. This would indicate that the wording dictated was basically a copying effort of a pre-established text. At times Smith revised the KJV text to make it an autobiographical account by Abraham. The wording as printed in the KJV was used as part of the text Abraham supposedly wrote by his own hand. It is clear that Joseph Smith had the Bible open to the book of Genesis as he dictated this section of the Book of Abraham. (276)

The Egyptian papers, including the Egyptian Alphabet, contain the record of Joseph Smith's efforts to work with ancient documents. One of the manuscripts of the "Egyptian alphabet" contains Joseph Smith's handwriting, together with the handwriting of his scribe Oliver Cowdery. These 1835 documents help us understand how Smith dictated the text of the Book of Mormon six years earlier. The Egyptian Alphabet and related papers are preserved manuscript

texts that show how Joseph Smith produced the ideas prior to and in connection with the Book of Abraham. These records have serious implications for the dictation process of the text of the Book of Mormon. (277)

Joseph Smith's work on his Book of Abraham Egyptian alphabet, seven years later, shows that he could not understand or interpret documents written anciently. Examinations done by Egyptologists show that Smith had not the slightest idea what the Egyptian characters meant relating to names, places, and subject matter. These manuscript pages clearly show that Joseph Smith pretended to translate Egyptian records. The claim that they had been written by the biblical Abraham is without a solid foundation. (278)

None of Joseph Smith's scribes or witnesses to the plates of the Book of Mormon saw Joseph Smith consult the gold plates when he dictated the text. Just as no one said they saw Joseph Smith use the Bible when he dictated the Book of Mormon, no one said they saw him use the Bible as he dictated part of the text of the Book of Abraham. (279)

The earliest version of Smith's story about the plates of gold being buried in the ground was told in a treasure-seeking content with the plates or record being protected by a guardian. Joseph Smith's revision of how he first heard about the plates and that he received religious instructions from an angel show we are dealing with a faith story. By 1838 the recounting of the 1823 vision had acquired more impressive theological significance. (339)

Joseph Smith like other individuals developed in his ideas. Smith's recollection of events in his early life took on more of a theological nature than historical reality, and his story grew in the telling. The words that he said the angel spoke to him in 1823 about Elijah became of important significance as he looked back to his early life. Placing the Garden of Eden and Adam-ondi-Ahman in Missouri was accepted by church members since it was spoken by Joseph. His theology about the nature of God became clear to him as he expounded the idea of a plurality of Gods. It was not an issue to him that some of his ideas changed or contradicted what he had said at an earlier time. Joseph was able to express his interpretation of events as he presented new ideas in a revelatory manner. As an oracle to his followers, Joseph's theological development became the word of God. (345)

Joseph Smith's view in the Book of Abraham is different in the context of the Judeo-Christian and Islamic belief in one God. One way to understand this is to know that Smith's religious beliefs changed over time. By this time (1842), he taught that there were many gods and that believers could become gods; also that there were Gods who had direction over the creation of this earth.

The monotheism in the Book of Mormon and Smith's corrections in the writings of Moses in Genesis made it clear his beliefs that there is only one God. The oneness of God was worked on in the lectures on theology (known as the Lectures on Faith). The ideas relating to God developed in the church and moved toward two separate members of the Godhead though there were varying degrees of this teaching. By 1839 Joseph Smith's idea of a governing council of Gods (polytheism) started to formulate. So when Smith worked on the latter portion of the text of

the Book of Abraham in Nauvoo he already accepted polytheism, though in LDS terms it is known as the plurality of Gods.

The concept of a council of Gods of creation was incorporated into Latter-day Saint temple worship in Nauvoo. The endowment ceremony contained the idea of a council of Gods giving direction for the creation of the world. (358)

About the Author

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Web Sites

Mormon Central	http://tinyurl.com/45c4o
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