

Robin Scott Jensen, Richard E. Turley Jr., and Riley M. Lorimer, eds. *Revelations and Translations, Volume 2: Published Revelations*. Volume 2 of the Revelations and Translations series of *The Joseph Smith Papers*. Dean C. Jessee, Ronald K. Esplin, and Richard Lyman Bushman, general eds. Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press, 2011. 726 pp. Notes, maps, photographs, illustration, timeline, appendices, tables. Hardback: \$69.95. ISBN: 978-1-60641-942-7

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The Church Historian's Press and Joseph Smith Papers Project produced an exceptional volume in September 2009, *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*¹ which published many of the earliest manuscripts of Joseph Smith's revelations. In Volume 2 of this series, which appeared in March 2011, they have provided students and scholars of early Mormonism with a new volume containing many of Smith's revelations in their earliest published form.

As the editors explain, this volume reproduces "the most significant printed versions of the revelations that were published or in the process of being published during Joseph Smith's lifetime." They further explain that "this volume is a companion to the first volume," the facsimile volume, and that together they "provide the most important primary sources needed to study the revelation texts and their development during Joseph Smith's lifetime" (xix-xx). The facsimile volume covers revelations received by Joseph Smith from 1828 to 1834. This volume also starts with Smith's earliest 1828 revelation but continues through to September 1842. Both volumes are mainly made up of Smith's revelations but also include other items like the "Testimony of Witnesses" in the facsimile volume. With slight modifications, it then becomes "the written Testimony of the Twelve" in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (566). The facsimile volume has 109 entries in Revelation Book 1 and fifty-three entries in Revelation Book 2. This volume has

¹ See my review, "Closer to the Source," *Irreantum* 12, no. 1 (2010): 142-48, and H. Michael Marquardt's review in *John Whitmer Historical Association Journal* 30 (2010): 275-78, <http://user.xmission.com/~research/mormonpdf/index.htm> (accessed February 2, 2012).

all sixty-five chapters in the Book of Commandments, the fourteen revelations for the Proposed Sixth Gathering, the twenty-five revelations published in *The Evening and the Morning Star*, the seven Lectures on Faith, and the 102 Sections in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the fifty-eight Sections in Oliver Cowdery's Book of Commandments with his markings, and finally the seven Sections first published in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants. With these two volumes the reader is able to follow the development of every word change for all the revelations published during Joseph Smith's lifetime.

Our current Doctrine and Covenants 8:6–8 has Oliver Cowdery's gift designated as the "gift of Aaron"; but in 1832 in Revelation Book 1, the gift is "the gift of working with the sprout,"² a term then changed in the 1833 Book of Commandments to "the gift of working with the rod" (31), and finally to the reading in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (still current) to "the gift of Aaron" (471).

This volume begins with a "Detailed Contents" table that "lists all revelations and other items in this volume" (ix–xvi). This "Detailed Contents" is divided into five sections: (1) The Book of Commandments, (2) Appendix 1: The Proposed Sixth Gathering of the Book of Commandments, (3) *Evening and the Morning Star*, (4) Doctrine and Covenants, 1835, and (5) Doctrine and Covenants 1844. There is a section for the "Selections from Oliver Cowdery's copy of the Book of Commandments," but as the editors point out, they do not list the revelations because these selections are "incomplete."

The editors identify each revelation with the chapter (Book of Commandments), section (Doctrine and Covenants), or date published (newspapers) along with a "standard date." The editors explain that this "standard date" is "based on careful study of original sources" and "is the date a revelation or other item was originally dictated or recorded. If that date is ambiguous or unknown" then the "best approximation" is given. "A bracketed 'D&C' reference to the 1981" edition of the LDS Doctrine and Covenants is also provided (ix–xvi). This exclusiveness to the Utah Church will make this volume a bit more difficult for those of other

² *The Joseph Smith Papers: Revelations and Translations, Manuscript Revelation Books, Facsimile Edition*, edited by Robin Scott Jensen, Robert J. Woodford, and Steven C. Harper (Salt Lake City: Church Historian's Press and Deseret Book, 2009), 16–17.

Restoration faiths in their research and study. A five-page table at the end of the volume, “Corresponding Published Versions of Revelations” (719–24), includes the Community of Christ Doctrine and Covenants section numbers. The editors explain that this section “is designed to help readers refer from one published version of a revelation or similar item to other published versions of that same item.”

The data compiled in the table include the date published in *The Evening and the Morning Star* (1832–33), the chapter numbers of the Book of Commandments, the section numbers of the 1835 and 1844 Doctrine and Covenants respectively, the section numbers of the LDS 1981 Doctrine and Covenants and finally the section numbers of the Community of Christ 2004 Doctrine and Covenants. I found this table somewhat awkward and easy to overlook because of its placement. It would have been much more useful to have had the 2004 Community of Christ section numbers in the “Detailed Contents” section, and not in the back of the book.

The introductions to this volume are first rate. The editors explain important developments that occurred with the publication of these revelations. For example, Oliver Cowdery wrote in September 1834³ that the *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which was to reprint in Kirtland the issues first printed in Missouri, would correct “errors, typographical and others” found in the revelations published in the Missouri printings. However, this Kirtland newspaper version “actually contained significant changes to the revelation texts” and “very few of the changes in the reprint represent a restoration back to the earliest text” (198–99).

Doctrinal developments and Church organization also changed the body of revelations, as the editors explain. For example, the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, Section 2 (now LDS 1981 D&C 20) was “greatly expanded” from what it had been in Chapter 24 of the Book of Commandments by adding the “office of ‘president of the high priesthood, bishop, high counselor, and high priest’.” 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.” To explain the changes, the editors suggest that “the Doctrine and Covenants was intended as a living handbook, containing up-to-date instructions” (xxxix).

³ “Prospectus,” *The Evening and the Morning Star*, September 1834, 192.

The main body of this volume contains “photographic” images of the 1833 Book of Commandments (xx, 13–172); the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants (311–593); selected pages from Oliver Cowdery’s Book of Commandments (Appendix 2, 600–635) with his markings on pages, made in preparation for the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants; and seven revelations from the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants (643–91) that are not in the 1835 first edition. The editors provide a thorough introduction and notes for each section of images, which are “printed in duotone, a format that combines two colors (in this case, Pantone brown 1545 and Pantone yellow 123). While these duotone images do not precisely match the colors of the original pages, they are an approximate match and convey the richness and depth of the original documents much better than black-and-white images” (xxxix). The images used for the Book of Commandments section are photographed from Wilford Woodruff’s personal copy.

The introductions provide such interesting and informative information as when the editors explain that the binding of Wilford Woodruff’s Book of Commandments “is similar to that of Woodruff’s first journal . . . suggesting both books were bound at the same time” (3). The source notes are equally interesting. For example, the editors explain that “two versions of the Book of Commandments title page are extant: a version without an ornamental border and a more common version with an ornamental border.” As the editors point out, “The original version was the borderless one and . . . printing was interrupted at some point to insert the border” (13). This kind of detail about the printing shows how much the editors appreciate the publication of these sacred books.

Other significant parts of the book include Appendix 1, which is the editors’ “proposed sixth gathering of the Book of Commandments” and an introduction that explains why they believe these chapters should have been included in the Book of Commandments. Much of the evidence for the proposed gathering comes from the Book of Commandments and Revelations manuscript (which the Joseph Smith Papers project designates Revelation Book 1), which was published in its facsimile edition after it became available to the project in 2005⁴ (8–9). This appendix is

⁴ John W. Welch and Dallin T. Morrow, Review of *The Book of Commandments and Revelations*, *Journal of Mormon History* 37, no. 2 (Spring 2011): 238, “The discovery of the Book of Commandments and Revelations came shortly before 2005, when the manuscript was turned over to the LDS Church History Library.”

followed by a section showing in parallel columns the revelations printed in the Independence (1832–33) and Kirtland (1835) editions of the *Star* (202–99) allowing the reader to see the changes between the two editions. It was in the reprinted *Evening and Morning Star* where “substantive changes to the revelation texts” first appeared (xxviii).

One area that I found particularly interesting was the editors’ chronology of the publication of the Book of Commandments and the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants. They explain with the Book of Commandments that “through textual and other sources,” they are able to “suggest time frames in which the individual gatherings . . . were likely typeset and printed” (9–10). This ability to create the chronology is made possible because of relationships between the manuscript Book of Commandments and Revelations (Revelation Book 1 in this series), the Book of Commandments, and *The Evening and the Morning Star*. The editors determined that the printing for the first gathering began as early as November 1832 but no later than December of that year. The second gathering was printed after the first gathering and before the third. They also dated the third gathering as “sometime after January 1833 and before circa May 1833.” The fourth and fifth gatherings were printed after May 1833 but before the printing office was destroyed in July 1833 (9–10).

The chronology for the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants is equally detailed and rich with sources. The editors use the copyright registration, the preface to the Doctrine and Covenants, a letter from W.W. Phelps to his wife, Sally, an editorial in the *Messenger and Advocate*, a letter from Joseph Smith to members in Missouri, his letter to the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, and the Kirtland Council Minute Book (designated Minute Book 1 in the JS Papers project). From these sources, they reconstruct the details for the printing of the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants (306–7).

As with the facsimile edition, this volume is an essential tool in understanding the evolutionary process of Smith’s revelations. As I quoted at the beginning of the review, this volume is a “companion” to the facsimile volume. The source notes, images, and introductions make this companionship perfectly clear. The editors’ work is informative and scholarly, even when dealing with the difficult subject of men changing God’s words. The editors boldly begin with William W. Phelps’s

declaration, “The commandments of the Lord are sacred, and above the invention of men” (xix). Every student of Mormonism will be pleased with the work of the Joseph Smith Papers project as they search this volume for a better understanding of how a modern-day prophet communed with his God and how the followers of this new religious movement sought to publish these revelations. I highly recommend this volume to readers of the *Journal of Mormon History*.