

Problems at Kirtland

The redemption of Zion was the important object of Joseph Smith since the expulsion of church members from Jackson County in the fall of 1833. In preparation for putting the saints back on their own lands Smith set up a "war department" consisting of church leaders. On September 22, 1835, eight years after going to the Manchester, New York hill, with his wife, Emma, Joseph Smith received a prophetic blessing for David Whitmer. Oliver Cowdery recorded, "This day Joseph Smith, jr. labored with Oliver Cowdery, in obtaining and writing blessings." The wording of the blessing included, "for behold, he [David Whitmer] it is, whom the Lord hath appointed to be captain of his host."¹ Two days later, on September 24 Joseph Smith wrote in his journal:

This day the High Council met at my house to take into consider[ation] the redemption of Zion and it was the voice of the spirit of the Lord that we petition to the Governer² that is, those who have been driven out <should> do so to be set back on their Lands next spring and we go next season to live or dy in Jackson County we truly had a good time and Covenanted to struggle for this thing u[n]till death shall desolve this union and if one falls that the rest be not discouraged but pesue [pursue] this object untill it is ac[c]omplished which may God grant u[n]to us in the name of Christ our Lord.

This day drew up an Arti<c>le of inrollment for the redemption of Zion that we may obtain volenteers to go next Spring to <Mo> I ask in the name of Jesus that we may obtain Eight hundred men <or one thousand> well armed and that they may acomplish this great work even so Amen.³

John Whitmer wrote of this meeting in his history:

And it came to pass on the 24 day of Sept 1835, on which day we met in course at the house of J[oseph]. Smith Jr. the Seer, where we according to a previous commandment given, appointed David Whitmer Capt of the Lord[']s host and Prs. F. G. Williams and Sidney Rigdon his assistants. And Pres. W. W. Phelps, myself, and John Corrill as an assistant quorum, and Joseph Smith Jr. the seer to stand at the head and be assisted by Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowd[e]ry. This much for the war department by revelation.⁴

¹ Patriarchal Blessing Book 1:13, CHL. See "David Whitmer's Blessing," *The Return* 2 (February 1890):212-13, Davis City, Iowa and Cook, *David Whitmer Interviews*, 261. The commandment to meet and organize a war department was given about this time.

² Daniel Dunklin was the governor of Missouri.

³ Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:41-42, September 24, 1835. There are no minutes recorded in the Kirtland Council Minute Book for this date.

⁴ Westergren, *From Historian to Dissident*, 173.

There were organized two quorums presided over by Joseph Smith, assisted by Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowdery. The first one was with David Whitmer, as captain, with Williams and Rigdon as assistants. The second quorum consisted of William Phelps, John Whitmer, and John Corrill. Though no formal army was in place, this revelation did prepare the leadership, like Zion's Camp in 1834, for possible military confrontation if a need existed.

John E. Page recalled what he heard about these appointments in Kirtland. He indicated that he heard nothing about the 1834 ordination of David Whitmer as Joseph Smith's successor but did hear about Whitmer's rank as chief in the church's military program. Page wrote the following in 1847:

But this I did hear, and that too from the mouths of many who said they were present when Joseph Smith laid his hands on D. Whitmer, referred to, and ordained him to the office of "CHIEF CAPTAIN of the hosts of Israel" in a *military capacity*, not a *seer, translator, revelator or prophet*, with the privilege of choosing his aid-de-camp; and he selected one Roger Orton for that office: this Orton told me himself. One Dr. F. G. Williams was chosen second in command, with the privilege of choosing his aid-de-camp. Bro Williams made choice of ourself to that office. . . .

This Matter has been with me and many others a topic of free and common talk with all those who were particularly interested and were present at the ordination of Whitmer, and all had one and the same to remark concerning Whitmer as being the chief military commandant of the hosts of Israel, and nothing higher in the capacity of a leader.⁵

The redemption of Zion, set for September 11, 1836, was still being looked forward to at this time. On March 13, 1836, it was the resolution of the presidency and members of the twelve "to emigrate on or before the 15 of May next, if kind providence smiles, upon us and opens [opens] the way before us."⁶

In July 1836 members of the church presidency took a trip east to New York and Massachusetts. Church leaders had previously borrowed large sums, creating a large debt owed to creditors. The reason for the trip east has been variously described as for business, for health, to locate a treasure (money), for missionary work, or that the trip included a combination of these reasons. The importance of this journey is indicated by who went, by the time away from church headquarters, and by the expense it took to travel from Kirtland to New York City, then to Boston, and finally to Salem, Massachusetts. Oliver Cowdery, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith made the trip. Cowdery wrote two letters that were published in the *Messenger and Advocate* that told what cities the four visited.

Two documents originating with Joseph Smith were written in August and help us understand the primary reason for the month-long journey. One is a revelation Smith received at Salem, and the other is a personal letter to Emma written thirteen days later. Both of these documents mentioned the object Joseph Smith was seeking. There was plenty of time to tour interesting sites, look into possible church business ventures or loans, and even take out a loan.

⁵ John E. Page, "Another Hoax Invented by Apostates," *Zion's Reveille* 2 (July 22, 1847):74-75, Voree, Wisconsin Territory, emphasis retained.

⁶ Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:188.

Oliver Cowdery wrote to his brother Warren about the nature of the trip and said it was for his health. This is indicated in the introduction to the first letter, "that his former degree of health may be restored." The following extracts from Oliver's letters indicate the public reason for Oliver and Sidney Rigdon going on the trip, "Brother R's and my own health," "my ill health," "ill state of my health," "recess from business, has so far been to my health."⁷ Brother "R" is Sidney Rigdon.

In Oliver Cowdery's letters, he describes visiting some sites of interest but he does not mention reasons for making the trip beyond health reasons. Once he described his traveling companions as "Our other brethren." According to Cowdery, the leading brethren left on the evening of July 25 from Fairport Harbor on a steamer for Buffalo, New York. On board some of the brethren discussed religion, or as Cowdery wrote they, contended for the faith. They traveled to Rochester, Utica, Albany, and finally to New York City where they spent about a week. Cowdery wrote, "The great exchange, once the pride and boast of the sellers and buyers of cash, is a heap. There is money yet in Wall street, and 'Draper, Underwood,' and others, ready to help incorporated bodies to plates and dyes, to make more" money.⁸ The two companies mentioned did engravings.

From New York City, the group took a boat to Providence, Rhode Island, and then took the railroad to Boston, Massachusetts. Oliver was enjoying himself:

It would be altogether uninteresting to lead you all the round of scouting to, and bathing in the sea, and how beneficial a change of climate, as well as a recess from business, has so far been to my health.

From Boston they traveled a short distance to Salem, but Cowdery does not state what the group did in that town. He does quote material relating to some history dealing with the alleged crime of witchcraft in that city. The reason why the church leaders were in Salem was explained many years later by Ebenezer Robinson who worked with Don Carlos Smith in the Kirtland printing office. Robinson wrote in his personal recollection:

A brother in the church, by the name of Burgess, had come to Kirtland and stated that a large amount of money had been secreted in a cellar of a certain house in Salem, Massachusetts, which had belonged to a widow, and he thought he was the only person now living, who had knowledge of it, or to the location of the house. We saw the brother Burgess, but Don Carlos Smith told us with regard to the hidden treasure.⁹

Arriving in Salem Joseph Smith received a revelation concerning their destination. The word received was shrouded in mystery since the initial object and reason for being in Salem was the hope to secure needed money. The revelatory document commenced:

⁷ Cowdery to "Dear Brother" [Warren A. Cowdery], August 3 [4], 1836, *Messenger and Advocate* 2 (September 1836):372-73, 375; Cowdery to "Dear Brother," August 24, 1836, *ibid.*, 3 (October 1836):388.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 2 (September 1836):375, emphasis omitted.

⁹ Ebenezer Robinson, "Items of Personal History of the Editor," *The Return* 1 (July 1889):105.

I the Lord your God am not displeased with your coming this Journey, notwithstanding your follies I have much treasure in this city for you, for the benefit of Zion; and many people in this city whom I will gather out in due time for the benefit of Zion, through your instrumentality. Therefore it is expedient that you should form acquaintance with men in this city, as you shall be led, and as it shall be given you.

Smith was told not to worry about his debts or about Zion whose date of redemption was drawing near:

And it shall come to pass, in due time, that I will give this city into your hands, that you shall have power over it, insomuch that they shall not discover your secret parts; and its wealth, pertaining to gold and silver, shall be yours. Concern not yourselves about your debts, for I will give you power to pay them. Concern not yourselves about Zion, for I will deal merciful[ly] with her.

Tarry in this place and in the regions round about, and the place where it is my will that you should tarry, for the main, shall be signalized unto you by the peace and the power of my Spirit, that shall flow unto you.

This place you may obtain by hire &c. And inquire diligently concerning the more ancient inhabitants and founders of this city, for there are more treasures than one for you, in this city: Therefore, be ye as wise as serpents and yet without sin, and I will order all things for your good as fast as ye are able to receive them: Amen.¹⁰

It appears that Joseph Smith considered the report he heard from Brother Burgess credible enough to make the trip to Salem. The church was in serious debt and this seemed to be a quick venture to obtain money without a lot of effort. Whether Joseph considered, if they found any money, it would be theirs to keep is not known. It would appear that Burgess came to Kirtland and discussed the matter with Joseph Smith with the intent that if they actually found the money they would keep it. Otherwise Burgess could have told someone else about the money and ask if there was a reward for turning it in to the proper authorities.

While in Salem, one of the places they visited was the East India Marine Society Museum (now Peabody Museum). Oliver Cowdery and Sidney Rigdon viewed the museum on August 6 while Joseph Smith visited it three days later.¹¹ Hyrum Smith and Oliver Cowdery went to Boston and were there on August 8, according to Brigham Young.¹²

A week later on August 17, Cowdery and Rigdon signed a promissory note for one hundred dollars from Jonathan Burgess: "For value received we promise to pay Jonathan Burgess one hundred dollars, one year from date with use."¹³

¹⁰ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 281; LDS D&C 111 (August 6, 1836). Copy also in the Book of the Law of the Lord, CHL.

¹¹ They signed their names in the "Album, for the Use of Visitors," under August 6 and 9, 1836, Peabody Museum, Salem, Massachusetts.

¹² Brigham Young Journal, August 8, 1836, CHL.

¹³ Promissory note of August 17, 1836, Joseph Smith Collection, CHL. The bottom of the note is torn and was probably also signed by Hyrum and Joseph Smith.

Two days later, on August 19, Joseph wrote a letter to Emma that Hiram Smith hand carried to her. Joseph wrote about the object of their mission and that they had "found the house" after Brother Burgess left them. The letter shows how important it was to locate the house:

Brother Hiram is about to start for home before the rest of us, which seems wisdom in God, as our buisness here cannot be determined as soon as we could wish to <have it>. I thought a line from me by him would be acceptable to you, even if it did not contain but little, that you may know that you and the children are much on my mind, with regard to the great object of our mishion you will be anxtiou to know, we have found the house since Brother Burjece left us, very luckily and providentialy, as we had one spell been most discouraged, the house is ocupied, and it will require much care and patience to rent or by it, we think we shall be able to effect it if not now within the course of a few months, we think we shall be at home about the midle of septtember, I can think of many things concerning our business but can only pray that you may have wisdom to manage the concerns that involve on you and want you should believe me that I am your sincere friend and husband in hast yours &c.¹⁴

Joseph Smith did not preach in Salem during the two weeks he was there. Rather forty-three-years-old Sidney Rigdon delivered a lecture at the Lyceum on Saturday, August 20. One of the local newspapers, the *Essex Register*, reported:

MORMONISM. Notices were sent round on Saturday, that Mr. Rigdon, of Ohio, would preach at the Lyceum that afternoon, on the subject of the Christian religion. Having understood that he was a *Mormonite*, we went to the Lyceum, expecting to hear something on the subject of the peculiar doctrines of that sect, and perhaps to get a view of the "Mormon Bible," translated from the Golden Plates said to have been discovered by Jo. Smith, their prophet! The preacher was a man of very respectable appearance, apparently about 40 years of age, and very fluent in his language. He commenced by reading the 1st chapter of the Epistle to the Galatians—then followed a prayer—he then began his discourse, founded upon Galatians i. 8; "Though we, or an angel from heaven, should preach any other gospel than that which we have preached to you, let him be accursed." He said we hear a great deal of want of charity, he thought the Saviour and his apostles were the most uncharitable persons he ever heard of.¹⁵

A few days later it was reported in the same newspaper that the group left Salem:

MR. RIGDON, the Mormon preacher, who introduced himself at our Lyceum last week, has since left the city, with his three or four associates. It is said they retain

¹⁴ Smith to "My beloved Wife," August 19, 1836, Salem, Massachusetts, Charles Aldrich Papers, State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, Iowa. A copy printed in 1879 can be found in "Letters of Joseph Smith, The Martyr," *Saints Herald* 26 (December 1, 1879):357; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 389-90.

¹⁵ *Essex Register* 36 (August 22, 1836):3, Salem, Massachusetts, emphasis retained.

possession of the tenement leased by them in Union street, and intent to return to this city next spring. None knew the names, character, or object of these men, until the day RIGDON held forth, although they had been for a week or two in the city.¹⁶

While in Salem for about seventeen days Joseph Smith did not locate the cache of money but considered returning in the spring of 1837 if necessary. This expectation never materialized. After Hyrum Smith departed, the three remaining members of the party spent a number of days in Boston. The *Boston Daily Times* told about a meeting held on August 24 where Rigdon was answered. Unlike Salem, Joseph Smith was recognized: "Joe Smith, the original founder of the sect and the high priest and prophet of his tribe of impostors, was also present, and was obliged to undergo the "searching operation" of divers questions which were propounded to him by those who knew more of his history than he was aware."¹⁷

Oliver Cowdery wrote to his brother that he had "just returned from a visit to the navy yard, Bunker hill monument and the burnt convent, in company with bro. R[igdon]."¹⁸ The three men arrived back at Kirtland in September. Later in 1841 Elder Erastus Snow commenced missionary work in Salem, having received a copy of the revelation from Hyrum Smith.

In November 1836 Oliver Cowdery went to Philadelphia to obtain printing plates for the bank, while Orson Hyde traveled to Columbus to petition the Ohio legislature for an act of incorporation. A meeting of the stockholders of the Kirtland Safety Society Bank was held on November 2, where the preamble and articles of the society were read three times and adopted. The first article stated, "The capital stock of said Bank shall not be less than four millions of dollars; to be divided into shares of fifty dollars each; and may be increased to any amount, at the discretion of the directors."¹⁹

Orson Hyde did not return from Columbus with a charter for the bank and a special meeting was held on January 2, 1837. Members of the society met and voted to annul the old constitution and adopted new articles of agreement. The wording of article one was changed to read in part, "The capital stock of said society or firm shall not be less than four million of dollars."²⁰ The bank was changed in the new articles of agreement to "society or firm." On February 10 an amendment was added to a legislative banking bill but was defeated.

It is of interest that for the period June 17, 1836, to May 10, 1837, there are no minutes of meetings in the Kirtland Council Minute Book. Scribes kept no journal for Joseph Smith from April 4, 1836, to January 1838, when Joseph left Kirtland. Three months after Smith, Rigdon, and Cowdery returned from Salem, church members were reminded to repent of their sins and backslidings so that the judgment of God would not fall upon them.²¹ This warning was given while the second edition of the Book of Mormon was being printed.

On January 10, 1837, Brigham Young, one of the twelve apostles, "gave us an interesting exhortation & warned us not to murmur [murmur] against Moses (or) Joseph [Smith] or the

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 36 (August 25, 1836):2.

¹⁷ *Boston Daily Times* 2 (August 26, 1836):2, Boston.

¹⁸ Cowdery to "Dear Brother" [Warren A. Cowdery], August 24, 1836, *Messenger and Advocate* 3 (October 1836):392.

¹⁹ *Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate. Extra*, December 1836, CHL.

²⁰ *Messenger, Extra.—March, 1837*, CHL; also in *Messenger and Advocate* 3 (March 1837):475.

²¹ Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* 1:111, December 11, 1836.

heads of the Church." The next week Wilford Woodruff attended a meeting of the seventies where President David Whitmer gave a lecture:

He warned us to humble ourselves before God lest his hand rest upon us in anger for our pride & many sins that we were run[n]ing into in our days of prosperity as the ancient Nephites did & it does now appear evident that a scourge awates this stake of Zion even Kirtland if their [there] is not great repentance immediately.

At the House of the Lord, on Sunday, January 22, Parley P. Pratt warned the saints to humble themselves before God, feed the poor, clothe the needy, and put away all their sins.²² In February another meeting was held in the sacred building. Wilford Woodruff wrote that Joseph Smith spoke to the saints for several hours. He wrote, "Joseph had been absent from Kirtland on business for the Church, though not half as long as Moses was in the mount, & many were stir'd up in their hearts & some were against him as the Israelites were against Moses."²³

Internal strife arose in the church early in 1837, stemming from problems with the church's financial institution, the "Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company." Stanley B. Kimball explained the situation:

The bank had difficulties from the beginning. The State of Ohio refused the Mormons a charter, and the bank was poorly underwritten. Heber [C. Kimball], for example, subscribed to \$50,000 worth of shares for only \$15 in cash. In all, 200 church members subscribed to 79,420 shares, worth at face value approximately \$3,854,000 at \$50 par value, which was backed up with only \$20,725 cash. The bank, furthermore, was weakened by speculation, mismanagement, and dishonesty.²⁴

While in the Kirtland Temple, Joseph Smith "proclaimed that Severe Judgment awaited those Characters that professed to be his friends & friends to humanity & the Kirtland Safety Society But had turned tr[a]itors & opposed the Currency & its friends which has given power in to the hands of the enemy & oppressed the poor Saints."²⁵ Even visitors to Kirtland noticed the dissatisfaction among the saints. William S. West wrote:

When I was in Kirtland, I ascertained from a variety of sources, too numerous to mention, that the Mormons had been in serious difficulty, many had been dissatisfied with their leaders, and wanted a new prophet, but the majority adhered to Smith. One day, when I went to the Temple, I saw a number of men about it, busy in conversation, Smith was among them, and the topics of discussion were the bank, money, the steam saw mill, etc.; the prophet was kept very busy, but at last he started toward the bank, when a man said to him, "brother Joseph, I want

²² Ibid., 1:121-22, entries for January 10, 17, and 22, 1837.

²³ Ibid., 1:125, February 19, 1837.

²⁴ Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 40. See also Kimball, "Sources on the History of the Mormons in Ohio: 1830-1838," *Brigham Young University Studies* 11 (Summer 1971):531-33.

²⁵ Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* 1:138, April 9, 1837.

to speak with you a minute," upon which he exclaimed, "my God, I wish I was translated!" He did not stop to speak with him, but went on grumbling that every one wanted to speak with him a minute, etc.²⁶

On July 23, 1837, Joseph Smith received a revelation for Thomas B. Marsh, president of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles:

Now I say unto you, and what I say unto you, I say unto all the twelve. . . . Exalt not yourselves; rebel not against my servant Joseph . . . Behold vengeance cometh speedily upon the inhabitants of the earth . . . And upon my house [Kirtland Temple] shall it begin and from my house shall it go forth saith the Lord. First among those among you saith the Lord; who have professed to know my name and have not known me and have blasphemed against me in the midst of my house saith the Lord.²⁷

A church conference met on September 3, 1837, in the Kirtland Temple, where objections were made to high councilors John Johnson, Joseph Coe, Martin Harris, and Joseph Kingsbury.²⁸ John Corrill wrote about these events:

During their mercantile and banking operations they not only indulged in pride, but also suffered jealousies to arise among them, and several persons dissented from the church, and accused the leaders of the church with bad management, selfishness, seeking for riches, honor, and dominion, tyrannising over the people, and striving constantly after power and property.

On the other hand, the leaders of the church accused the dissenters with dishonesty, want of faith, and righteousness, wicked in their intentions, guilty of crimes, such as stealing, lying, encouraging the making of counterfeit money, &c.; and this strife or opposition arose to a great height, so that, instead of pulling together as brethren, they tried every way in their power, seemingly, to destroy each other; their enemies from without rejoiced at this, and assisted the dissenters what they could, until [Joseph] Smith and Rigden [Sidney Rigdon] finally were obliged to leave Kirtland, and, with their families, came to Far West, in March or April 1838.²⁹

Thomas B. Marsh in Far West, wrote to Wilford Woodruff in Vinalhaven, Fox Islands, Maine, telling about the split in the church:

²⁶ West, *A Few Interesting Facts, Respecting the Rise, Progress and Pretensions of the Mormons*, 14.

²⁷ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 282-83; LDS D&C 112:15, 24-26; RLDS D&C 105:6, 9-10.

²⁸ Kirtland Council Minute Book, 234-38. See also letter copied into the Scriptorium Book of Joseph Smith in Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:217-19. It appears that Joseph C. Kingsbury made reconciliation with the church.

²⁹ John Corrill, *A Brief History of the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints*, 27. Smith arrived in Far West, Missouri on March 14, 1838. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:213.

it seems that [Warren] Parrish, J[ohn]. F. Boynton, Luke Johnson, Joseph Coe, and some others, united together for the overthrow of the church. President Smith, and his company, returned [to Kirtland], on, or about the 10th of December [1837]; soon after which this dissenting band, openly, and publicly, renounced the church of Christ, of Latter Day Saints, and claimed themselves to be the old standard; called themselves the church of Christ, excluded that of Saints, and set at naught Br. Joseph, and the whole church, denounced them as heretics.³⁰

During the week of December 24-30, 1837, twenty-eight members were cut off from the church or excluded (excommunicated) by the High Council of Kirtland. It is not known if any of these church members were present at this meeting. John Smith, in a letter to his son George A. Smith, explained:

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 [Dissenters] 28 persons where [were] upon after mature Discussion proceeded to cut them off from the chh [church]; 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.³¹

Vilate Kimball wrote to her husband Heber in England: "the leaders of this band is Martin Harris, Warren Parrish, Joseph Coe, Luke Jo[h]nson, and John Boynton. (I have no doubt but it will pain your heart to read these two last names; but so it is.) They have by their stratagem drawn away many and some whom I believe are honest (but such I think will soon return)."³²

On January 7, 1838, Joseph Smith received a revelation for Edward Partridge instructing: "Let my people be aware of dissentiors [dissenters] among them, lest the enemy have power over them; Awake my shepherds and warn my people! for behold the wolf³³ cometh to destroy them,—receive him not."³⁴

Five days later (January 12), a revelation to the church presidency said: "Thus Saith the Lord Let the presidency of my Church take their families as soon as it is practicable and a door is open for them and moove [move] unto the west [Far West] as fast as the way is made pla[in] before their faces and let their hearts be comforted for I will be with them."³⁵ Joseph Smith left Kirtland about 10 o'clock that night.³⁶

Shortly after the departure of Smith, a notice was posted on the outside of the Kirtland Temple by these dissenters, calling for a meeting of the "Church of Christ." In accordance with

³⁰ Marsh to Woodruff, n.d., in *Elders' Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints* 1 (July 1838):36-37, Far West, Missouri.

³¹ John and Clarissa Smith to George A. Smith, January 1, 1838, George A. Smith Papers, CHL. Added material to letter by Andrew Jenson not included.

³² Vilate Kimball to Heber C. Kimball, January 19-29, 1838, CHL.

³³ David W. Patten stated on February 5, 1838 that the wolf "was the dissenters in Kirtland" (Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 138).

³⁴ Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 284.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 286.

³⁶ Manuscript History B-1:780; *History of the Church* 3:1.

Ohio law, trustees were chosen and the original church name was incorporated, with Joseph Coe, Martin Harris, and Cyrus Smalling as trustees. The records of Geauga County reported the action.³⁷

State of Ohio } Be it known that before me Warren
Gauga County ss. } A. Cowdery a Justice of the Peace in and for Kirtland
Township in said County personally appeared Joseph Coe, Martin Harris & Cyrus
Smalling and took the following oath to wit; You and each of you do swear in the
presence of Almighty God, that you will support the Constitution of the United
States and the constitution of the state of Ohio, and will faithfully discharge your
duties as Trustees of the Church of Christ in Kirtland township in said County to
the best of your abilities
Kirtland Jany 18th. 1838. W.A. Cowdery J.P.

State of Ohio } ss. To the Clerk of the Court of Common
Gauga County } Pleas in said County.

We the undersigned Trustees of the Church of Christ do certify under our
hands & seals that we do recognize the name of the Church of Christ and that the
above proceedings, have been had, and said Church is situated in Kirtland
Township in said County.

Joseph Coe [Seal]
Martin Harris [Seal]
Cyrus Smalling [Seal]

Kirtland Jany 18. 1838.

Hepzibah (Hepsy) Richards wrote her brother, Willard Richards, concerning the events
that recently occurred at Kirtland:

A large number have dissented from the body of the church and are very
violent in their opposition to the President [presidency, viz., Joseph Smith Jr.,
Sidney Rigdon, and Hyrum Smith] and all who uphold them. They have
organized a church and appointed a meeting in the house [Kirtland Temple] next
sabbath. Say they will have it, if it is by the shedding of blood. They have the
keys already.

The printing-office has been attached on a judgment that [Grandison]
Newel held against the Presidents of K[irtland] money. Last monday it was sold at
auction into the hands of Mr. Millican [Nathaniel Milliken], 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

³⁷ Geauga County, Ohio, Execution Docket 1831-1835, microfilm 1,289,257, item 1, Family History Library. This entry was located by Lachlan Mackay, Director of the Kirtland Temple Historic Center, Kirtland, Ohio in 1996.

prevent further destruction by fire. A part of these men are members of the church—a part dissenters.³⁸

Benjamin F. Johnson explained who burned the facility:

The printing office and material which our enemies thought to use to bolster up a church organization opposed to the Prophet was set on fire by Bro Lyman R. Sherman and destroyed.³⁹

Lyman Sherman and others were brought before Warren A. Cowdery, justice of the peace, for setting the fire that destroyed the printing office and bookbindery. They were discharged because "no facts were elicited that went too [to] convict the prisoners of the crime charged in the complaint, either as principle or accessories."⁴⁰

Parley P. Pratt, one of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, was married to Thankful Halsey for nine years and they were expecting the birth of their first child. After giving birth to a baby boy on March 24, 1837, Thankful died, and Parley named the child after himself.⁴¹ Leaving the baby with a Sister Allen, Parley went to Canada and, after his return, married Mary Ann Frost Stearns on May 14, 1837.⁴² Parley Pratt wrote years later:

About this time, after I had returned from Canada, there were jarrings and discords in the Church at Kirtland, and many fell away and became enemies and apostates. There were also envyings, lyings, strifes and divisions, which caused much trouble and sorrow. By such spirits I was also accused, misrepresented and abused. And at one time, I also was overcome by the same spirit in a great measure, and it seemed as if the very powers of darkness which war against the Saints were let loose upon me. But the Lord knew my faith, my zeal, my integrity of purpose, and he gave me the victory.⁴³

But until that "victory," Parley P. Pratt was upset with the church leadership. On May 23 Pratt wrote a letter to Joseph Smith expressing his disapproval of how Smith and Sidney Rigdon were conducting business affairs. Parley started his letter: "As it is difficult to obtain a personal interview with you at all times, by reason of the multitude of business in which you are engaged, you will excuse my saying in writing what I would otherwise say by word of mouth." He wrote sharply to Joseph that he believed that the whole scheme of "speculation in which we have been

³⁸ Hepzibah Richards to Willard Richards, January 18-19, 1838, original CHL, as cited 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, 1982), 71.

³⁹ "A Life Review," Benjamin Franklin Johnson Papers, 24, CHL. The top of the manuscript page noted "Printing office burned by L R Sherman." See Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), 29-30.

⁴⁰ Oliver Cowdery's Docket Book, January 17-19, 1838, typed copy, original in Huntington Library.

⁴¹ "Obituary," *Messenger and Advocate* 3 (April 1837):496.

⁴² "Hymeneal," *Ibid.*, 3 (May 1837):512.

⁴³ *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, 144.

engaged, is of the devil." He was convinced that Joseph and Sidney "both by precept and example, have been the principa[l] means in leading this people astray."

Parley said he was upset that Joseph had sold to him and others three lots of land at the extraordinary "price of \$2000 dollars, which never cost you 100 dollars." Parley was concerned because this action would ruin him and his family. The personal notes of indebtedness were turned over by Smith to "the mercy of the bank." Parley considered this action "taking advantage of your brother by an undue religious influence."⁴⁴ Pratt's letter closed with a post script: "Do not suppose for a moment that I Lack any Confidence in the Book of Mormon 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."⁴⁵

Later at Far West, Missouri, Pratt after his reconciliation with Joseph Smith wrote an explanation of his earlier May 1837 letter and said that it was published without his permission. He wrote that the letter was not a true copy and had been altered. He admitted that he wrote the letter, yet he had expressed his "entire confidence in the faith of the church." He stated that the leaders were liable to errors and mistakes "in things which were not inspired from heaven; but managed by their own judgement." He concluded, "I no longer censure them [Smith and Rigdon] for any thing that is past."⁴⁶

The same spirit of murmuring since February was reaching a heightened state by the end of May. At the worship service of May 28, Joseph Smith spoke in his own defense; and Sidney Rigdon, as Joseph's spokesman, spoke in favor of Smith's integrity. In addition to Parley P. Pratt, charges were filed against Frederick G. Williams of the First Presidency, David Whitmer of the extended church presidency, Lyman E. Johnson of the Quorum of the Twelve, and Warren Parrish, a seventy and former scribe of Joseph Smith. Wilford Woodruff wrote the following in his journal about the high council meeting. The part in angled brackets for this particular journal entry was written in Taylor shorthand:

May 29th I met in the house of the Lord to attend an important Conference or meeting of the high Council to attend to some important business of the Church. Let memory speak upon this subject. Two <of the presidency> two <of the Twelve and> one <of the seventy were stood before the Council for [agression?]>. It was considered not <lawful to> try <the president> before the high Council but before the Bishop. The Presidents withdrew. The council closed without transacting business.⁴⁷

At this meeting Sidney Rigdon presided. The charge made by five church members against Frederick G. Williams, David Whitmer, Parley P. Pratt, Lyman Johnson, and Warren

⁴⁴ Pratt to "Dear Brother" [Joseph Smith Jr.], May 23, 1837, as cited in *Zion's Watchman*, March 24, 1838, New York City. *Naked Truths about Mormonism* 1 (April 1888):4, stated that Pratt's original letter or a copy of it was in the Lake County Historical Society. Present location unknown.

⁴⁵ The postscript was not included in the printing of Pratt's letter in *Zion's Watchman*. It was included in *Naked Truths about Mormonism* 1 (April 1888):4.

⁴⁶ "To the Public," *Elders' Journal* 1 (August 1838):50.

⁴⁷ Kenney, *Wilford Woodruff's Journal* 1:147-48, entries for May 28-29, 1837. It is possible that the word "agression" should be "transgression."

Parrish stated that the accusers believed "their course for some time past has been injurious to the Church of God in which they are high officers."⁴⁸ Presidents Williams and Whitmer asked whether they should be tried before the present council.

One of the high councilors, John P. Greene, gave "his opinion that the present council was not the proper authority to try Presidents Williams & Whitmer." It was decided by a majority of the council that they could not conscientiously proceed to try Frederick G. Williams and David Whitmer. They were then discharged.⁴⁹

In the afternoon with Sidney Rigdon and Oliver Cowdery presiding, high councilor Martin Harris "motioned that Prest. F G Williams take a seat with the Presidents." Williams took his seat and now presided with Rigdon and Cowdery. The minutes state the following concerning Parley P. Pratt:

Eld[er]. P. P. Pratt then arose and objected to being tried by President Rigdon or Joseph Smith Jr. in consequence of their having previously expressed their opinion against him, stating also that he could bring evidence to prove what he then said.

Sidney Rigdon finally said "he could not conscientiously proceed to try the case and after a few remarks left the stand." After some remarks, Oliver Cowdery also left the stand. Frederick Williams, the remaining president, said he "should be unwilling to preside in the case and left the stand." The minutes kept by Warren Cowdery read, "The council and assembly then dispersed in confusion."⁵⁰ There was no judgment against any of the individuals brought to trial. On the same day, Orson Pratt, Parley's brother, together with Lyman E. Johnson (both members of the twelve) preferred charges to Bishop Newel K. Whitney against Joseph Smith. The document reads:

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.

Lyman E. Johnson
Orson Pratt

Kirtland May 29th 1837

Warren Parrish also preferred charges the same day against Sidney Rigdon "for 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." In addition another Apostle, Luke S. Johnson, preferred charges against Joseph Smith Sr. "for closing the doors of the House of the Lord against the high council."⁵¹

⁴⁸ Kirtland Council Minute Book, 226, CHL.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 228.

⁵⁰ The High Council Minutes for May 29, 1837 are contained in Kirtland Council Minute Book, 226-30.

⁵¹ The three statements are in Newel K. Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University.

Mary Fielding wrote to her sister about going "to the house of the Lord and found that Elder P P Pratt had taken upon himself the Services of the morning. we sat and heard him deliver a very plausible decourse [discourse] he labored throughout two hour[s] that nearly all the Church had departed from God and that Brother J. S [Joseph Smith] had committed great sins." Mary said that when Orson Pratt began to speak "I and a great many more left the House." She reported that she heard that Elder Warren Parrish addressed the people and that the meeting broke up "for the first time since the House of <the> Lord was built without commemorating the Lord[']s Supper. Many tears ware [were] <that> day shed by those who had come up here to worship God <in> his <house> but could not have the priviledge."⁵² In her July letter Mary Fielding wrote that Orson Pratt withdrew his charge, saying that he did not know anything personally against Joseph Smith.⁵³

Parley P. Pratt explained that he went privately to President Smith and asked forgiveness:

I went to brother Joseph Smith in tears, and, with a broken heart and contrite spirit, confessed wherein I had erred in spirit, murmured, or done or said amiss. He frankly forgave me, prayed for me and blessed me. Thus, by experience, I learned more fully to discern and to contrast the two spirits, and to resist the one and cleave to the other.⁵⁴

Leaving Kirtland Parley P. Pratt went to New York City and, during August and September, wrote what became an important missionary booklet titled *A Voice of Warning and Instruction to All People*.⁵⁵

At the church conference held in Kirtland on September 4, 1837, Luke S. Johnson, his brother Lyman, and John F. Boynton were not sustained in their station as apostles.⁵⁶ Joseph Smith considered Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer, John Whitmer, and William W. Phelps, church leaders in Missouri, to be in transgression. In Kirtland, Leonard Rich was singled out. Paraphrasing Galatians 1:8, Smith wrote:

Though we or an Angel from Heaven preach any other gospel or introduce [any] order of things <than> those things which ye have received and are authorised to receive from the first Presidency let him be accursed.⁵⁷

Six days later on September 10, the three apostles, Luke and Lyman Johnson and John F. Boynton made a confession to the church and retained their apostleship. All of the apostles were

⁵² Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson, circa June 15, 1837, Mary Fielding Smith Collection, CHL.

⁵³ Mary Fielding to Mercy Fielding Thompson, letter commencing July 8, 1837, CHL. This section of the damaged letter reads: "Orson Pratt who express[ed] [lacuna] for what he had sa[id] [lacuna] Spirit, he withdrew the ch[arge?] [lacuna] did not know personal[l]y that [lacuna] Brother Joseph and believed [lacuna] quite satisfyd [satisfied], he said more [lacuna]."

⁵⁴ *Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt*, 144.

⁵⁵ Pratt to Don Carlos Smith, October 3, 1837, *Elders' Journal* 1 (October 1837):8, Kirtland.

⁵⁶ Kirtland Council Minute Book, 235; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:218.

⁵⁷ Smith to "Dear Brotheren," letter to John Corrill et al., September 4, 1837, Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:220.

reconciled, and the Quorum of the Twelve was together again. Afterward Joseph left Kirtland on September 27, with Vinson Knight and his brother William Smith for Far West, Missouri, to settle difficulties in the church.⁵⁸ Joseph Smith returned from Missouri on December 10.

Luman Shurtliff (also spelled Shirliff), who had heard missionaries preach the gospel a few years earlier, came to Kirtland to investigate Mormonism. Shurtliff talked with David Whitmer and wrote years afterward about his discussion:

I told him [David Whitmer] briefly in as few words as possible my belief and unbelief and that I did believe the Gospel they preached as far as I read it in the Bible But I could not say that I believed that Joseph Smith Jun was a true Prophet of God for I did not neither do I believe the Book of Mormon is a Revelation from God. Then facing him I said, now you know what I believe and what I do not believe And if you think I am a fit subject for Baptism I am ready to go to the water if not I intend to start holm [home] to morrow and neaver trouble my head any more about Mormonism. Mr Whitmer was silant a few seconds the<n> replide I will go to the <water> and baptise you or get one of my Quorum to do it. On our way to the River he called on Sylvester Smith and he Baptised me.

This baptism occurred on August 21, 1836. Going home Shurtliff prayed and heard a voice saying: "Joseph Smith Jun Is a Prophet of the Most High God raised up for the restoration of Israel in these last Days And the Book of Mormon which you hold under your arm is true and brought forth for the Restitution of the scattered remnants of Jacob."⁵⁹ William E. McLellin maintained that he left the church about this time and sent in his elder's license to church headquarters, thereby leaving his apostolic ministry.

In January 1837, McLellin, who was in Illinois, received a letter from fellow apostles dated December 18, 1836, asking him to come back to Kirtland. William McLellin wrote back: "My course I know has been novel in the history of the transactions of the anointed." He indicated he was sorry for what he had done and asked forgiveness. "If so write to me immediately and let me *know* it. And please to obtain from President Smith my licence [license] and send it to me, so that I may again feel that I have authority to lift up *my* voice in the midst of this generation."⁶⁰ McLellin was issued another minister's license and returned to fellowship with the apostles.

At Kirtland, Joseph Smith's name was associated with a couple of young women. While the church had a code of morality, members at times did not strictly follow it. According to William E. McLellin (see below) the first incident involved a Miss Hill. Nothing is known about her except that she worked at the Smith residence. The time period is not certain since Oliver Cowdery's name is mentioned as being at Kirtland when Joseph Smith III was born on November 6, 1832. In fact Cowdery had left for Independence, Missouri, in November 1831 and did not return until August 1833. It is possible that the incident occurred near the birth of Frederick Granger Williams Smith (June 20, 1836) rather than the birth of Joseph Smith III.

⁵⁸ *Elders' Journal* 1 (November 1837):27, Kirtland.

⁵⁹ Luman Andros Shurtliff Autobiography, original in CHL, 72-73. In his autobiography, he spells his name Shirliff. See also *Messenger and Advocate* 3 (March 1837):472.

⁶⁰ McLellin to "My dear old Friends," January 24, 1837, copy of original letter, CHL, emphasis retained. See Shipp and Welch, *Journals of William E. McLellin*, 230.

The second female was a teenager named Fanny Alger. Oliver Cowdery mentioned her name in January 1838 as the girl he was referring to, whereas statements and church records do not name her. Fanny was born to Samuel Alger and Clarissa Hancock Alger in September 1816. It appears that Joseph Smith had a sexual relationship with her.

Exactly what year this occurred has been a subject of controversy since it was not until 1837-38 when a disagreement between Oliver Cowdery and Joseph Smith reappeared and, for a number of reasons, Cowdery resigned from the church. After moving away from church headquarters, Fanny Ward Alger married Solomon Custer on November 16, 1836 at Dublin, Indiana.⁶¹ It is apparent that whatever happened between Fanny and Joseph occurred prior to the fall of 1836. Joseph would have been thirty and Fanny nineteen.

At a church trial on the conduct of Oliver Cowdery held on April 12, 1838, at Far West, Missouri, Ebenezer Robinson recorded, "Joseph Smith jr testifies that Oliver Cowdery had been his bosom friend, therefore he intrusted him with many things. He then gave a history respecting the girl business."⁶² It was not until three years after Joseph Smith's death that William E. McLellin visited Emma Smith in Nauvoo, Illinois. McLellin discussed the events concerning her husband Joseph. Their conversation took place in August 1847.⁶³

McLellin's talk with Emma Smith was during the time when she talked to others about Joseph Smith's involvement with polygamy. Later McLellin wrote two letters to Joseph Smith III, who was then president of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. That church took a strong position that Joseph Smith was not involved with any women than Emma. The letter mentioned incidents about which McLellin had heard but which he had not witnessed. There were two known letters from William McLellin to Joseph Smith III. The first letter was written in 1861 but does not give any names, and the second letter was written in 1872, twenty-four years after talking to Emma. If McLellin was making up the story of what Emma Smith had confirmed to him in 1847, then Joseph Smith III could easily have discussed it with Emma who was sixty-eight-years-old, but who remained mentally alert and coherent until her death in 1879. William E. McLellin wrote in 1872:

Now Joseph [Smith III] I will relate to you some history, and refer you to your own dear Mother for the truth. You will probably remember that I visited your Mother and family in 1847, and held a lengthy conversation with her, retired in the Mansion House in Nauvoo. I did not ask her to tell, but I told her some stories I had heard. And she told me whether I was properly informed.

Dr. F[rederick]. G. Williams practiced with me in Clay Co. Mo. during the latter part of 1838. And he told me that at your birth your father committed an act with a Miss Hill—a hired girl. Emma saw him, and spoke to him. He desisted, but Mrs. Smith refused to be satisfied. He called in Dr. Williams, O[liver]. Cowdery, and S[idney]. Rigdon to reconcile Emma. But she told them just as the

⁶¹ Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy: A History* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2nd ed., 1989), 9.

⁶² Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 168.

⁶³ McLellin wrote, "I had many hours conversation with Mrs. Smith, and learned many particulars from her, relative to the history of her husband from her first acquaintance with him, until the time of his cruel death." *The Ensign of Liberty* 1 (December 1847):34.

circumstances took place. He found he was caught. He confessed humbly, and begged forgiveness. Emma and all forgave him. She told me this story was true!!

Again I told her I heard that one night she missed Joseph and Fanny Alger. she went to the barn and saw him and Fanny in the barn together alone. She looked through a crack and saw the transaction!!! She told me this story too was verily true.⁶⁴

There is no indication that Joseph III discussed McLellin's letter with Emma and that she confirmed or corrected McLellin's statement. There is a late recollection by Mosiah Hancock, son of Levi Hancock, written fourteen years after his father's death. Mosiah Hancock was born in 1834 and his autobiography was written about 1896 when he was sixty-two. His information may have been obtained through family tradition. In his account, he says his father performed a marriage ceremony between Joseph Smith and Fanny Alger near the date of March 29, 1833, when Levi himself was married. There are historical problems with the text that does not make it a reliable source as far as this marriage is concerned.⁶⁵

Reports of the Fanny Alger incident show selective screening of what was discussed between Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery. David W. Patten talked to Cowdery in the summer of 1837, while Thomas B. Marsh talked to him in November 1837 at Far West. One of the issues was whether Joseph Smith confessed to adultery with Fanny Alger. A second issue is whether Cowdery lied about Joseph Smith committing adultery with Fanny. At the church trial Patten gave his testimony:

David W. Patten testifies, that he went to Oliver Cowdery to enquire of him if a certain story was true respecting J. Smith's committing adultery with a certain girl, when he [Cowdery] turned on his heel and insinuated as though he was guilty; he [Cowdery] then went on and gave a history of some circumstances respecting the adultery scrape stating that no doubt it was true. Also said that Joseph told him [Cowdery], he had confessed to Emma, Also that he [Cowdery] has used his influence to urge on lawsuits.⁶⁶

Another witness at the trial was Thomas B. Marsh, president of the Twelve Apostles, who told about the Patten/Cowdery conversation in Kirtland and the Smith/Cowdery discussion at Far West in November 1837:

Thomas B. Marsh testifies that while in Kirtland last summer, David W. Patten asked Oliver Cowdery if he, Joseph Smith jr, had confessed to his wife that he was guilty of adultery with a certain girl, when Oliver Cowdery cocked up his eye very knowingly and hesitated to answer the question, saying he did not know as he was bound to answer the question yet conveyed the idea that it was true.

Last fall after Oliver came to this place he [Marsh] heard a conversation take place between Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery when J. Smith asked him if he had ever confessed to him that he was guilty of adultery, when after a

⁶⁴ McLellin to Joseph Smith III, commenced in July 1872, CCLA.

⁶⁵ Autobiography of Mosiah Hancock, CHL.

⁶⁶ Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 167, meeting of April 12, 1838.

considerable winking &c. he said *No*. Joseph then asked him if he ever told him that he confessed to any body, when he answered *No*.⁶⁷

All of the details of what they discussed are not known, but they shook hands and agreed to let the matter drop. Warren and Lyman Cowdery, Oliver's brothers, inquired about the rumors they heard. In a letter Oliver Cowdery explained his position on the matter relating to Joseph Smith:

You will see from the other page that your own and Brother Lyman's requests concerning the *Stated* confession made to Mr. Smith, is, if I am to be credited, not so. From what he pretended to have made it, is to me unaccountable. I can assure you and bro. Lyman, that as God is to judge my soul in the world to come, I never confessed, intimated <or admitted> that I ever willfully lied about him. When he was here we had some conversation in which in every instance I did not fail to affirm that what I had said was strictly true. A dirty, nasty, filthy affair of his and Fanny Alger's was talked over in which I strictly declared that I never deviated from the truth on the matters, and as I supposed was admitted by himself.

Oliver continued his letter to his brothers in Kirtland:

At any rate, just before leaving, he [Joseph Smith] wanted to drop every past thing, in which had been a difficulty or difference—he called witnesses to the fact, gave me his hand in their presence, and I might have supposed of an honest man, calculated to say nothing of former matters. Never believe that Oliver will disgrace the gray hairs of his father, or the high sense of honor in the bosom of his brothers, so much as to acknowledge to Joseph Smith, Jr. that he has lied about him. There is something to[o] damning in the thought.⁶⁸

Oliver Cowdery received correspondence from his brothers in Kirtland saying that Joseph Smith was publicly talking about their private meeting and that Oliver had lied. Oliver wrote to Joseph:

I learn from Kirtland, by the last letters, that you have publicly said, that when you were here I confessed to you that I had willfully lied about you—this compells me to ask you to correct that statement, and give me an explanation—until which you and myself are two.⁶⁹

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, 167-68, emphasis retained. A council met on November 6, 1837, and the minutes state, "All difficulties were satisfactorily settled except a matter between J. Smith jr., Oliver Cowdery and T. B. Marsh which was referred to themselves with the agreement that their settlement of the affair should be sufficient for the Council." *Ibid.*, 120.

⁶⁸ Oliver Cowdery to Warren A. Cowdery, January 21, 1838, Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 81, Huntington Library, emphasis retained.

⁶⁹ Cowdery to Smith, January 21, 1838, a copy of letter in Oliver Cowdery to Warren A. Cowdery, January 21, 1838, Oliver Cowdery Letterbook, 80. It is not known if Joseph Smith received the letter as he left Kirtland on January 12, 1838.

From the above discussion, it appears that Joseph Smith had a sexual encounter with Fanny Alger. Emma saw Fanny with Smith in a barn and Joseph later admitted it to Emma. Oliver Cowdery knew about the episode, but Joseph Smith did not appear willing to define it as adultery. After Cowdery and Smith agreed to let matters drop, it was Smith who brought it up publicly in Kirtland, since his return from Far West in December, and said that Cowdery lied about him. This report caused the split between them as Cowdery explained in his letter.

The second edition of the Book of Mormon was published at the church printing office in Kirtland and included the date 1837 on the title page. It is generally known as the 1837 edition. It is not known when the type was first set for the galleries but it was probably in the fall of 1836. Joseph Smith made some corrections on the pages of the Printer's Manuscript of the Book of Mormon. It appears that this edition was funded by John Goodman, who was a recent convert from Canada, and that Parley P. Pratt assisted since the title pages states it was "Printed by O. Cowdery & Co. for P. P. Pratt and J. Goodson." The *Messenger and Advocate* printed a notice in its February 1837 issue stating that Oliver Cowdery's interest in the printing company was now owned by Joseph Smith Jr. and Sidney Rigdon.⁷⁰

The preface to the 1837 edition of the Book of Mormon presented to the reader an explanation indicating "manuscript editions" (i.e., the 1830 Book of Mormon) contained typographical errors but they had been compared with the original. The preface stated:

Individuals acquainted with book printing, are aware of the numerous typographical errors which always occur in manuscript editions. It is only necessary to say, that the whole has been carefully re-examined and compared with the original manuscripts, by elder Joseph Smith, Jr. the translator of the book of Mormon, assisted by the present printer, brother O. Cowdery, who formerly wrote the greatest portion of the same, as dictated by brother Smith.

For the second (1837) edition Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and the typesetters made refinements in the text. About 2,000 were recorded on the pages of the Printer's Manuscript with another 1,000 not indicated on that document. The largest number of changes was to the book's grammar. Contrary to the preface, the majority of the textual changes were not typographical in errors. For example, the word "which" was corrected to "who" over 700 times, "was" to "were," "is" to "are," "are" to "is," and "were" to "was." While these clarifications upgraded the grammar and made the book clearer, they should not be regarded as the words dictated in 1829 that appeared in the first edition.⁷¹

Though some errors in typesetting were made in the 1830 Book of Mormon (BOM), many of the corrections made by Joseph Smith were changes that he made on the Printer's Manuscript for the 1837 edition. A couple of passages were clarified relating to God and Christ. The following five examples are theologically significant and clarify texts found in First Nephi 3. Both the original manuscript (O MS), where available, and the printer's manuscript (P MS) are used for these passages. The 1830 edition is printed first, with a note on the reading of the manuscripts, and then followed by the revised text of the 1837 edition. Emphasis indicates the changed text.

⁷⁰ "Notice," *Messenger and Advocate* 3 (February 1837):458, dated Feb 1.

⁷¹ Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development*, 2nd ed., 27.

[1] 1830 BOM, 25

And he said unto me, Behold, the virgin which thou seest, is the mother of God, after the manner of the flesh.

P MS, 16 "the son of" inserted [O MS, 16-17 same as 1830 BOM]

1837 BOM, 27 (LDS 1 Nephi 11:18; RLDS 3:58)

And he said unto me, behold, the virgin *whom* thou seest, is the mother of *the Son of God*, after the manner of the flesh.

[2] 1830 BOM, 25

And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!

P MS, p. 17 no insertion [O MS, 17 same as 1830 BOM]

1837 BOM, p. 27-28 (LDS 1 Nephi 11:21; RLDS 3:62)

And the angel said unto me, behold the Lamb of God, yea, even the *Son of the* Eternal Father!

[3] 1830 BOM, 26

And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the Everlasting God, was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record.

P MS, 17 no insertion [O MS, 17-18 same as 1830 BOM]

1837 BOM, p. 28-29 (LDS 1 Nephi 11:32; RLDS 3:86)

And I looked and beheld the Lamb of God, that he was taken by the people; yea, the *Son of the* everlasting God was judged of the world; and I saw and bear record.

[4] 1830 BOM, 28

And a great and a terrible gulf divideth them; yea, even the word of the justice of the Eternal God, and Jesus Christ, which is the Lamb of God

P MS, 19 "Mosiah who" inserted ("Mosiah" should have been "Messiah")

[O MS, 19 same as 1830 BOM except "sword" was copied as "word"]

1837 BOM, 30 (LDS 1 Nephi 12:18; RLDS 3:127)

And a great and a terrible gulf divideth them; yea, even the word of the justice of the eternal God, and *the Messiah who* is the Lamb of God

[5] 1830 BOM, 32

and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues, and people, that the Lamb of God is the Eternal Father and the Saviour of the world

P MS, 22 "son of the" inserted [O MS not extant]

1837 BOM, p. 35 (LDS 1 Nephi 13:40; RLDS 3:193)

and shall make known to all kindreds, tongues and people, that the Lamb of God is the *Son of the* eternal Father, and the Savior of the world

The above examples indicate that substantive changes were made in addition to typographical and grammatical corrections. Comparisons between the first and second editions

of the Book of Mormon show that, in the later edition, about 3,000 changes in grammar and orthography were made to overcome objections about the poor wording in the first edition. The publishers, Pratt and Goodman, hoped to have published the Book of Mormon together with the Doctrine and Covenants in one volume, but it was finally considered that the volume would be too large for a pocket companion.

In June preparations were made for members of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles to travel to England and preach the gospel. Heber C. Kimball was called to head this mission.⁷² John Goodman also went to England bringing copies of the 1837 Book of Mormon with him.

As mentioned, by December 1837, there were still tensions in the church. For those remaining in Kirtland, religious worship was important. Of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, only Martin Harris was residing in Kirtland. Stephen Burnett, one of the early Ohio converts, wrote a letter to Lyman E. Johnson in April 1838, explaining his change in attitude after hearing Martin Harris speak:

I have reflected long and deliberately upon the history of this church & weighed the evidence for & against it — loth to give it up — but when I came to hear Martin Harris state in a public ~~congregation~~ that he never saw the plates with his natural eyes only in vision or imagination, neither Oliver [Cowdery] nor David [Whitmer] & also that the eight witnesses never saw them & hesitated to sign that instrument for that reason, but were persuaded to do it, the last pedestal gave way, in my view our foundations was sapped & the entire superstructure fell a heap of ruins, I therefore three weeks since in the Stone Chapel [Kirtland Temple] gave a full history of the church since I became acquainted with it, the false preaching & prophecying of Joseph together with the reasons why I took the course which I was resolved to do, and renounced the Book of Mormon with the whole scene of lying and deception practiced by J[oseph]. S[mith] & S[idney]. R[igdon] in this church, believing as I verily do, that it is all a wicked deception palmed upon us unawares.

Burnett said that, after he spoke, Warren Parrish, Luke Johnson, and John Boynton spoke, all three concurring with him. When they were finished speaking:

M[artin] Harris arose & said he was sorry for any man who rejected the Book of Mormon for he knew it was true, he said he had hefted the plates repeatedly in a box with only a tablecloth or a handkerchief over them, but he never saw them only as he saw a city throught [through] a mountain. And said that he never should have told that the testimony of the eight [witnesses] was false, if it had not been picked out of [h]im but should have let it passed as it was.⁷³

This debate broke up the newly established Church of Christ headed by the three trustees, Martin Harris, Joseph Coe, and Cyrus Smalling. Many members of the larger Church of the

⁷² Marquardt, *Joseph Smith Revelations*, 377.

⁷³ Burnett to Johnson, April 15, 1838. On May 24, 1838, a copy of the original was made. This copy was then recopied in 1839 into a letterbook. The above extract is from the 1839 copy, located in Joseph Smith Letterbook 2:64-66, CHL. This letterbook contains copies of letters from April 20, 1837, to February 8, 1843, with a few letters of other years.

Latter Day Saints (also known as the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints) left the Kirtland area for Missouri. There were some saints who continued to build up the church after the Kirtland apostasy, but dissatisfaction left many wondering where their faith was in Mormonism. About 15 percent of the local membership in the Kirtland area disassociated themselves from the church. "Almost half of those who were excommunicated, disfellowshipped, or dropped from their positions of responsibility in 1837 or 1838 later repented and returned to the Church."⁷⁴

This was a sad state of affairs. Many saints had left their homes to gather to Kirtland and to be at church headquarters. Despite all the prophetic promises, bickering among church leaders and financial considerations put church members in a delicate position. Soon many members chose to leave Kirtland and travel west to Missouri to join others at a new gathering center.

⁷⁴ Milton V. Backman, Jr., *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio 1830-1838* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 328. See also Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith* 2:217n2.