

THE PASSAGE OF MORMON PRIMITIVISM

PETER CRAWLEY

SOME OF MORMONISM'S most important ideas appear to lie at the point of a paradox. The president of the Church, for example, is considered to be the divinely appointed mouthpiece of God, a prophet who receives revelation for the Church; yet Mormonism falls short of a doctrine of infallibility with respect to this office. Today, in spite of the fact that it is a revealed religion, Mormonism is all but creedless. While many Latter-day Saints seem to view their theology as comprehensive and definitive, in fact it is neither; both in scope and definition there are many unanswered questions and areas of ambiguity. Certainly a considerable degree of standardization has come to Mormon theology; but the theology remains largely "unofficial." Few doctrinal issues have been addressed in formal pronouncements from the highest church leaders. It is mainly by "unofficial" means—Sunday school lessons, seminary and BYU religion classes, sacrament meeting talks, and books by church authorities and others who ultimately speak only for themselves—that the theology is described, interpreted and taught to a new generation. Among active Latter-day Saints there is a wide diversity of belief on some very fundamental issues. (A number of times I have asked groups of colleagues whether they believe God continues to grow in knowledge or God knows everything and no longer progresses in this respect; invariably opinion has divided about evenly on this question.)

Mark Leone has recently suggested that this unofficial and idiosyncratic theology is one of Mormonism's greatest strengths.¹ Ongoing revelation and the possibility of change, a tenet of the Church since its beginning, is only served by a theology that is not rigidly formalized and delimited. Witness, for example, the extension of the priesthood to blacks which occurred without trauma despite earlier statements by some church authorities that this

PETER CRAWLEY is chairman of the Mathematics Department at Brigham Young University.

could not come to pass until after the Second Advent. Such a theology accommodates the personal flexibility people need to live in a rapidly changing society while providing an anchor at a time when values are in a state of flux. Because there is no creed merely to memorize, an informal theology must be subjected to study to be understood, study that builds conviction—in Mormon terms a “testimony”—in the believer. The absence of a formal creed means that each generation must produce a new set of gospel expositors to restate and reinterpret Mormonism, a process which, in Leone’s words, keeps “a vital faith vital.”²

It seems clear that this idiosyncratic, informal quality of the theology of the Mormons, this delicate equilibrium between the authoritative and the personal, the canonical and the inspirational, derives from the Church’s earliest years. Mormonism’s first decade saw a fundamental transition, a passage from a loosely organized, anti-creedal, familial group of “seekers” to a Church defined by unique doctrines, led by a prophet. This passage brought a set of the earliest attitudes to the point of equilibrium that has maintained to the present day. Here history is particularly useful, for the features of this equilibrium as well as its importance in the modern Church are illuminated by an examination of the passage that brought it into being.

An examination of this fundamental passage begins with the so-called *primitive gospel* movement, an important aspect of the religious milieu in which Mormonism was born. Emerging in New England, the South, and the West between 1790 and 1830, the adherents of this diverse movement responded independently yet with some similarity to the revivalism and sectarian conflict that characterized evangelical Protestantism. A few of those who led some branch of the movement—e.g., Charles G. Finney and Alexander Campbell—were formally trained for the ministry; many others were not. These leaders shared a biblicist point of view; they tended to reject the pessimistic predestination of Calvinism and anticipated mass conversions to Christianity as the harbinger of an imminent Second Advent; and they taught that the established churches were corrupt, having departed from the ancient, primitive Christian faith. Two other important attitudes tended to be shared throughout the movement. Primitive gospelers were *egalitarian* in the sense that they were highly critical of a hierarchal clergy; they held that religion should be more personal, more independent of organized institutions. In addition, they were *anti-creedal*: deploring the disunity and conflict among the established churches resulting from widely differing interpretations of the Bible, they attacked this problem, not by imposing an authoritarian statement of doctrine, but by eschewing any dogma beyond the most fundamental principles enunciated in the scriptures.³

Primitive gospel tendencies are clearly discernible in the family of Joseph Smith and in the families of his grandparents.⁴ Equally important are the primitive gospel attitudes possessed by those who surrounded Joseph Smith during the months preceding the formal organization of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, Martin Harris, especially David Whitmer, his brothers John, Peter, Jacob and Christian, and his brother-in-law Hiram Page.⁵ Marvin Hill has pointed out that Joseph Smith’s 1820 vision embodied a number of primitive

gospel concerns, and that the Book of Mormon itself is a clear advocate of a primitive gospel faith.⁶ A primitive gospel orientation is apparent in the autobiography of Joseph Smith's mother who portrays the efforts in publishing the Book of Mormon and organizing the Church as very much a family affair.⁷ David Whitmer's account of these events—written, it must be acknowledged, fifty years after the fact—describes a loosely organized, anti-creedal group of "seekers" in which Joseph Smith was distinguished *only* by his "call" to translate the gold plates. Whitmer, who of all the earliest Mormons most clearly reflected a primitivistic point of view, believed that during the eight months preceding its formal organization on April 6, 1830, the Church was as organized as it needed to be, that in this embryonic state it was closer to the primitive ideal than at any other time in its history.⁸

Although Mormonism was strikingly primitivistic during its earliest months, it differed from other primitive gospel movements in a number of ways, e.g., in its rejection of the infallibility of the Bible and in its possession of the Book of Mormon, a new volume of scripture. But more fundamentally it differed from them in that in the midst of this egalitarian, anti-creedal group stood a man who spoke with God. Other primitive gospelers—Elias Smith, for example—had initiating visions. Joseph Smith, on the other hand, continued to receive revelations. Inevitably as new converts sought the revealed will of God through him, his stature in the developing church would grow to a point of overwhelming preeminence and his revelations would take on the weight of scripture and become part of an expanding body of dogma. Indeed this extraordinary position of Joseph Smith was explicitly acknowledged the day the Church was formally organized in a revelation which designated him a "seer, a translator, a prophet, an apostle of Jesus Christ" (BofC xxii, D&C 21).⁹ Thus embryonic Mormonism embodied intrinsic tensions which over the next eight years would grow to the point of rupture.

This egalitarian view of the Church and the tensions it produced are illustrated by two events which occurred soon after the Church was organized. In July 1830 Oliver Cowdery wrote to Joseph Smith in Harmony, Pennsylvania, that the important revelation known as "The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ" (BofC xxiv, D&C 20) contained an erroneous phrase—part of what is now verse 37, "and truly manifest by their works that they have received of the Spirit of Christ unto a remission of their sins." And he commanded Smith "in the name of God to erase those words, that no priestcraft be amongst us." The year before Cowdery had been the subject of a revelation which seems to be an early version of "The Articles and Covenants." Entitled "A Commandment from God Unto Oliver How He Should Build Up His Church & the Method Thereof" and known only in a manuscript copy in Cowdery's handwriting, this earlier revelation includes most of verse 37 but not the phrase Cowdery considered in error. Likely some of his anxiety resulted from what he perceived to be an unauthorized addition to a revelation directed to him. In any event, a few days after receiving Cowdery's letter, Joseph Smith visited him at the Whitmer home in Fayette, New York, and after a lengthy discussion, convinced him and the Whitmers

that the phrase was indeed proper.¹⁰

During the last week in August Joseph Smith moved with his family to Fayette and there discovered that Hiram Page, supported by Cowdery and the Whitmers, had been receiving revelations directed at the body of the Church—a situation hardly surprising in an egalitarian congregation in which all were expected to enjoy the benefits of divine inspiration. In response, however, Joseph Smith received a revelation (BofC xxx, D&C 28) which declared that “no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this Church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jr.” At a conference of the Church on September 26th, Page’s revelations and the ensuing revelation to Joseph Smith were discussed; and in a dramatic step away from an egalitarian conception of the Church, Page renounced his revelations and the conference agreed to support Smith.¹¹ The same issue arose again in February, 1831, when a woman by the name of Hubble began receiving revelations to the confusion of some of the church members.¹² This occasioned a revelation to Joseph Smith (BofC xlv, D&C 43) which underscored that of the preceding September:

And this ye shall know assuredly, that there is none other appointed unto you to receive commandments and revelations until he [Joseph Smith] be taken, if he abide in me. But verily, verily I say unto you, that none else shall be appointed unto this gift except it be through him, for if it be taken from him he shall not have power, except to appoint another in his stead.

As late as April, 1833, Joseph Smith wrote to a church member in Missouri that “it is contrary to the economy of God for any member of the Church, or any one, to receive instructions for those in authority, higher than themselves; . . . if any person have a vision . . . it must be for his own benefit and instruction.”¹³

In the summer of 1830 Joseph Smith commenced a systematic revision of the Bible, an undertaking that would stretch over the next three years. Soon after he began, he was joined by Sidney Rigdon, a prominent Ohio preacher who converted to Mormonism in November, 1830, and immediately became Joseph Smith’s scribe. Many of the revelations received by Smith touch upon this activity (e.g., D&C 25, 35, 37, 42, 45, 47, 73, 76, 77, 90, 91, 93, 124). And it is clear that during this period the distinctive aspects of Mormon theology began to develop—the most obvious example, the dramatic vision of the hereafter (D&C 76) shared by Smith and Rigdon in February 1831 while they were revising the Gospel of John. But the anti-creedalism of the early Church insured that, apart from the February, 1831, vision which was printed in the Mormon newspaper *The Evening and the Morning Star* in July, 1832, little of this growing theology would be openly discussed during the decade of the 1830s.

Another strain appeared in June, 1831, when the office of high priest was introduced into the Church. Up to this point, every worthy man in the Church was a member of a lay priesthood, holding the office of elder. Now certain members were singled out for higher office, a move toward a hierar-

chal priesthood that in later years, at least, was severely condemned.¹⁴ These stresses erupted into an open, unresolved dispute with the attempt to print the revelations to Joseph Smith in book form.

Three months after the Church was organized, Joseph Smith and John Whitmer began to arrange and copy the revelations that Smith had received up to that time. During this early period, manuscript copies of certain of these revelations circulated among a few. In June, 1831, an important new convert, William W. Phelps, a New York newspaperman, arrived in Kirtland, Ohio, where Joseph Smith and the bulk of the Mormons had recently located. A month later Phelps was designated the church printer; and at a conference in Kirtland in September, he was directed to purchase a press and type and proceed to Independence, Jackson County, Missouri—newly appointed as a gathering place for the Latter-day Saints—there to publish a newspaper in support of the Church.¹⁵

With the prospects of a Mormon press came the possibility of printing Joseph Smith's revelations and making them more widely available to the church membership. At the first of a series of conferences in Hiram, Ohio, in November, 1831, it was agreed to print these revelations—more than sixty at this point—in book form under the title "Book of Commandments" in an edition of 10,000. Cowdery was delegated to carry the manuscript revelations to Independence, Missouri, for publication.¹⁶ Putting the revelations in print would give them a new weight, a greater authority. And David Whitmer, the persistent anti-creedalist, and a few others objected. The revelations "are not law," he declared. "They were given mostly to individuals . . . for their individual instruction, and the church had no need of them. . . . It was not the will of the Lord that the revelations should be published."¹⁷ On the concluding day of the conference Joseph Smith received a revelation (D&C 70) calling him, Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, W. W. Phelps and Sidney Rigdon—a group known subsequently as the Literary Firm—to assume the responsibility for publishing the revelations. Five months later the Literary Firm met in Independence, reduced the edition of the Book of Commandments to 3,000, and appointed Phelps, Cowdery, and John Whitmer to actually supervise publication.

Not until December, 1832, was the Book of Commandments in press. By July 20, 1833, five thirty-two page signatures had been struck off, leaving one, possibly two signatures, yet to be printed. That afternoon a large body of Missourians swarmed into the printing office, threw the press and type out of an upper story window and then pulled down the building. Sheets of the incomplete Book of Commandments were salvaged from the rubble of the printing office and as they blew about the streets of Independence and subsequently assembled into books.¹⁸ Those revelations appearing in the Book of Commandments reflect the primitivistic nature of early Mormonism: two-thirds of the sixty-five "chapters" are personal communications; none, with the possible exception of ch. xvi, breaks new theological ground.¹⁹

The destruction of the Mormon press in Independence was the prelude to a series of violent confrontations that ended with the expulsion of the Mor-

mons from Jackson County in November, 1833. Six months later, armed with a promise of assistance from the governor of Missouri, Joseph Smith led a military expedition out of Kirtland aimed at recovering the Mormon holdings in Jackson. Only after they arrived in Missouri in June did the Mormons learn that the governor had withdrawn his support; and with little hope of returning the Latter-day Saints to their Jackson properties without the aid of Missouri militia, Joseph Smith disbanded his troops.²⁰

Zion's Camp, as this expedition was called, marked a major step in the growth of Joseph Smith's temporal power—a process that paralleled and catalyzed the movement of Mormonism away from its primitivistic beginnings. Failure of the Camp precipitated some dissension but its fraternal aspects insured that Joseph Smith would suffer little loss of stature from the experience. After disbanding Zion's Camp, Joseph Smith met with the leaders of the Church in Missouri; and consistent with ch. xlv of the Book of Commandments quoted above, he ordained David Whitmer his successor.²¹ However one understands this ordination it does demonstrate the influence Whitmer still exerted on the young Church. A similar elevation of Oliver Cowdery would occur in December.

A second attempt to print the revelations was launched in September, 1834, at a meeting of church authorities in Kirtland. Here it was agreed to publish a new edition at the press Oliver Cowdery had been operating in Kirtland since the preceding December. Again this was to be an undertaking of the Literary Firm. By the summer of 1835 the book was being set in type; and in mid-September the first copies were delivered by the Cleveland binder.²²

This second edition, bearing a new title *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Latter Day Saints*, prints nearly twice as many revelations as the *Book of Commandments*. A number of the reprinted revelations contain substantial changes: Section 2 (now D&C 20; BofC xxiv), for example, includes additions concerning the offices of high priest and President of the High Priesthood, and Section 13 (now D&C 42; BofC xlv) is modified to reflect adjustments in the implementation of the Law of Consecration. A few of the revelations new to this edition contain sweeping theological statements, e.g., Sections 91 and 7 (now D&C 76, 88) which deal with the nature of the hereafter and the events surrounding the Second Advent. The first third of the *Doctrine and Covenants* is comprised of seven "Lectures on Faith." Written by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon and delivered before a school of the elders in Kirtland during the winter of 1834–5, these lectures treat such basic theological questions as the necessity and effect of faith, man's relationship to God and the nature of salvation. The most distinctive idea, that God and Jesus Christ are distinct beings, appears in the fifth lecture.

Again David Whitmer protested. The *Doctrine and Covenants*, he declared, is "a creed of religious faith," in primitive gospel terms a clear denunciation.²³ Indeed these objections were strong enough to elicit a response in the *Doctrine and Covenants'* preface—a response that captures in two sen-

tences the passage from the anti-creedalism of the primitive gospelers to the position to which Joseph Smith and his later converts had moved:

There may be an aversion in the minds of some against receiving anything purporting to be articles of religious faith, in consequence of there being so many now extant; but if men believe a system, and profess that it was given by inspiration, certainly, the more intelligibly they can present it, the better. It does not make a principle untrue to *print* it, neither does it make it true not to print it.

Other changes were occurring in Kirtland as well, all tending to concentrate Joseph Smith's authority and spread it to every aspect of life. In 1835 the Mormons began publishing a partisan newspaper, the *Northern Times*, and dabbling in Democratic politics. In November of that year Joseph Smith performed the first marriage under religious rather than civil authority. By 1837 Mormon polygamy had moved beyond theory.²⁴ It was economics, however, that brought these tensions to a head.

In November, 1836, the Mormons drew up articles of agreement for a bank in Kirtland. When a charter was denied by the state legislature, an unchartered, note-issuing, joint stock company was founded in place of the bank; and in January it opened its doors for business and began circulating paper currency. Joseph Smith was the Cashier, the principal officer; Sidney Rigdon was the President. By mid-1837 the Kirtland "bank" had collapsed—the result of inadequate capitalization, loss of confidence stemming from the lack of a corporate charter and the panic of 1837. Dissension in the Mormon community was rife.²⁵

At the center, of course, was Joseph Smith whose public statement that those who helped meet the obligations of the Church "should be rich," and private comment that he had received "the word of the Lord" upon the subject of the Kirtland bank, were taken as prophetic declarations that the bank would prosper.²⁶ When it failed, the anxiety which had been growing in the old guard over the increasingly authoritarian position of Joseph Smith and the drift of the Church away from its original primitive form deepened to disillusionment. Warren Cowdery, Oliver's brother, forthrightly expressed this in an editorial in the July, 1837, issue of the church newspaper *Messenger and Advocate*:

If we give all our privileges to one man, we virtually give him our money and our liberties, and make him a monarch, absolute and despotic, and ourselves abject slaves or fawning sycophants. If we grant privileges and monopolies to a few, they always continue to undermine the fundamental principles of freedom, and, sooner or later, convert the purest and most liberal form of Government into the rankest aristocracy Whenever a people have unlimited confidence in a civil or ecclesiastical ruler or rulers, who are but men like themselves, and begin to think they can do no wrong, they increase their tyranny and oppression and establish a principle that man, poor frail lump of mortality like themselves, is infallible. Who does not see a principle of popery and religious tyranny involved in such an order of things? Who is worthy the name of a freeman, who thus tamely sur-

renders the rights, the privileges, and immunities of an independent citizen?

One of those touched by the Kirtland dissension was Parley Pratt, a convert of 1830, one of the Church's Twelve Apostles, and the father of Mormon pamphleteering. Pleading Joseph Smith's forgiveness for his momentary contentiousness, Parley fled to New York City in July, 1837, to preach the gospel and renew himself. Few New York doors opened to him; so as any literary man would instinctively do, he retired to his room and wrote. In two months he produced the most important of all non-canonical Mormon books, the *Voice of Warning*.²⁷

It was not the first Mormon tract; a year before Orson Hyde had published his broadside *Prophetic Warning* in Toronto which warned of the judgements to accompany the Second Advent without specifically mentioning the Latter-day Saints. But it was the first systematic statement and defense of the fundamentals of Mormonism. More than this it erected a standard for all future Mormon pamphleteers, setting down a formula for describing the tenets of Mormonism as well as biblical proof-texts, arguments, examples and expressions that would be used by others for another century. And it demonstrated the power of the press in spreading the Mormon message; although sales were slow at first, within two years the first edition of 3,000 was out of print and Parley was preparing a second edition. It was, finally, a signal that the primitivistic chapter of Mormon history was about to close.

On January 12, 1838, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon rode away from the disintegrating Mormon community in Kirtland and headed for the new colony that was forming in Caldwell County, Missouri. In Missouri Oliver Cowdery, David and John Whitmer and W. W. Phelps were in open rebellion, incensed by what they believed to be an effort on the part of some of the church leaders to "unite ecclesiastical and civil authority, and force men under the pretense of incurring the displeasure of heaven to use their earthly substance contrary to their own interest and privilege."²⁸ Their dissidence drew intemperate responses from Joseph Smith's galvanized supporters, that the church authorities should be upheld "right or wrong," that "no one should speak against what they said."²⁹ On March 10, four days before Joseph Smith reached the Mormon settlement, Phelps and John Whitmer were excommunicated from the Church. A month later Cowdery and David Whitmer were excommunicated—victims of an evolution they could not accommodate. Adding fuel to this conflagration, Phelps and Cowdery were in possession of a press, and in May they began to assemble it with the intent of publishing a newspaper. One can only guess at the extent to which this posed a threat to the Missouri Mormons. Under any circumstances in mid-June they ordered Cowdery, the Whitmers and Phelps out of the county and apparently confiscated the press.³⁰ Six months later—the animosity between Mormons and Missourians having passed the point of combustion—the Latter-day Saints were fleeing into Illinois, and their leaders, Joseph Smith, his brother Hyrum, Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt and others were beginning terms of many months in Liberty and Columbia Jails.

The events just following Joseph Smith's ordeal in Liberty Jail mark Liberty as a watershed in Mormon history. Late in 1839 Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon journeyed to Washington to plead for federal assistance in recovering Mormon property left behind in Missouri. In Philadelphia they met Parley Pratt and his brother Orson. Each of the Pratts spent time with Joseph Smith as he visited the Latter-day Saints in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Parley later reported that it was at this time that Smith first taught him the doctrine of the eternal nature of marriage.³¹ At the first of the year Parley published his *Millennium and Other Poems* (New York, 1840) which includes "A Treatise on the Regeneration and Eternal Duration of Matter." This essay, written to pass the time in Columbia Jail, contains a clear denial of an ex nihilo creation and the earliest statement of the Mormon belief in a finitistic God. Orson Pratt left Pennsylvania to take up a mission in Scotland where he published his *Interesting Account of Several Remarkable Visions* (Edinburgh, 1840)—the first printed account of Joseph Smith's cataclysmic 1820 vision. During the spring of 1840 Samuel Bennett, a Mormon elder missionarying in Philadelphia, published there *A Few Remarks by Way of Reply to an Anonymous Scribbler* which includes an affirmation of the Mormon belief in a corporeal, anthropomorphic God and allusions to the 1820 vision and the eternal nature of marriage. In New Jersey about the same time, Benjamin Winchester printed his *Examination of a Lecture Delivered by the Rev. H. Perkins* which contains a reference to the Mormon doctrine of the pre-existence of spirits. Back in Nauvoo in August, 1840, Joseph Smith preached a funeral sermon which first discussed the doctrine of vicarious baptism for the dead.³²

It is clear that immediately after his escape from Liberty Jail, Joseph Smith began to openly teach many of Mormonism's most distinctive doctrines. Others have identified the Nauvoo period (1840–1844) as the time when the more dramatic aspects of Mormon theology emerged.³³ But the flood of new ideas following on the heels of his incarceration at Liberty together with the hints and allusions to them that earlier surfaced in Kirtland show that, for the most part, these distinctive doctrines were fully formulated in Joseph Smith's mind before he set foot in Nauvoo.³⁴ To what extent the months of solitude in Liberty Jail affected the doctrinal development of Mormonism is now difficult to assess. What does seem apparent is that, free from the inhibiting influence of David Whitmer and the old guard, Joseph Smith walked away from Liberty eager to discuss openly theological ideas that were only whispered of in Kirtland.

Mormonism emerged from Liberty Jail with a new attitude toward the printed word. During the nine years 1830–1838 Mormon pamphleteers produced just three polemical tracts, all published away from the main body of the Church—Orson Hyde's *Prophetic Warning* (Toronto, 1836), Parley Pratt's *Voice of Warning* (New York, 1837) and Parley Pratt's *Mormonism Unveiled: Zion's Watchman Unmasked* (New York, 1838). During 1840 they published almost twenty.³⁵

In Nauvoo Joseph Smith's position as a prophetic leader reached a point of equilibrium between the primitivism of New York and the authoritarianism of northern Missouri. With apparently little unease he could

direct the Latter-day Saints to invest their money in a church-sponsored hotel (D&C 124) or deliver sweeping theological discourses like the ones at Ramus, Illinois, on April 2, 1843 (D&C 130) and at Nauvoo on April 7, 1844 (*Times and Seasons* 5:612-17).³⁶ At the same time he could take a classical primitive gospel stance as with Josiah Butterfield in January, 1843:

In reply to Mr. Butterfield, I stated that the most prominent differences in sentiment between the Latter-day Saints and sectarians was, that the latter were all circumscribed by some peculiar creed, which deprived its members the privilege of believing anything not contained therein, whereas the Latter-day Saints have no creed, but are ready to believe all true principles that exist, as they are made manifest from time to time.³⁷

Again when some Nauvoo authorities were about to censure Pelatiah Brown for teaching unorthodox doctrines, Joseph Smith chided these authorities for "acting like Methodists," adding

Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not good because he errs in doctrine.³⁸

And a cautiousness persisted toward solidifying the gospel in print: despite the many Mormon tracts published in the eastern United States and Great Britain, only one new theological book issued from the Mormon press in Nauvoo—Parley Pratt's collection of essays *An Appeal to the Inhabitants of the State of New York* (1844).

In January, 1842, Ebenezer Robinson, the church printer in Nauvoo, announced that he was making stereotype plates for another edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.³⁹ Not until after the death of Joseph Smith in June, 1844, however, was this edition printed. It added only seven revelations to those published nine years before in Kirtland plus a statement on the assassination of Joseph and Hyrum Smith. Twice more, in 1845 and again in 1846, editions were printed from the same stereotype plates in order to supply the Latter-day Saints with this book during the years to come while they built the Mormon kingdom in the Great Basin—a fitting symbol that the passage was complete, that the Church leaving Nauvoo would be the Church that would flourish in the West.

NOTES

Parts of this article appeared earlier in the *Princeton Library Chronicle* and are used here with the permission of the editors.

¹Mark P. Leone, *Roots of Modern Mormonism* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1979), pp. 171-2, 190-3.

²*Ibid.*, p. 192. This ongoing process of restating Mormon theology is the theme of Thomas Alexander's recent article "The Reconstruction of Mormon Doctrine: From Joseph Smith to Progressive Theology" *Sunstone* 5 (1980): 24-33 which focuses on the events just after the turn of the century. Such a restatement actually occurred twice during the nineteenth century—in the

1850s with such books as John Jaques' *Catechism for Children* (Liverpool, 1854), Parley Pratt's *Key to Theology* (Liverpool, 1855), Orson Pratt's series of eight pamphlets *True Faith, True Repentance*, etc., (Liverpool, 1856–7), and Franklin D. Richards' *Compendium* (Liverpool, 1857); and in the 1880s through such works as John Taylor's *Items on Priesthood* (Salt Lake City, 1881) and his *Mediation and Atonement* (Salt Lake City, 1882), Charles W. Penrose's "*Mormon*" *Doctrine Plain and Simple* (Salt Lake City, 1882), F. D. Richards' and James A. Little's *Compendium* (Salt Lake City: 1882), and John Nicholson's *The Preceptor* (Salt Lake City, 1883). It occurred again in the mid twentieth century through the writings of Joseph Fielding Smith, John A. Widtsoe, Lowell Bennion, and others.

³Marvin S. Hill, "The Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom, 1830–1844" (PhD diss., Univ. of Chicago, 1968), p. 6–36.

⁴Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith, the Prophet, and his Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool, 1853), p. 9, 34–6, 41–2, 46–50. Richard L. Anderson, *Joseph Smith's New England Heritage* (Salt Lake City, 1971), p. 21–6, 50–61, 104–9.

⁵David Whitmer, *An Address to All Believers in Christ* (Richmond, Mo., 1887). Hiram Page in *The Olive Branch, or Herald of Peace and Truth to All Saints* 2 (August 1849): 28–9. *Tiffany's Monthly* 5 (1859): 50–1, 119–21, 163–70. D. Michael Quinn, "The First Months of Mormonism," *New York History* 54 (1973):317–33.

⁶Hill, p. 52–6, 80–108.

⁷Lucy Mack Smith, p. 73ff.

⁸Whitmer, p. 28–33, 45–8.

⁹B of C xxii refers to chapter xxii in the *Book of Commandments* and D&C refers to Section 21 in the current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants.

¹⁰*History of the Church*, 1:104–5. The manuscript "A Commandment from God Unto Oliver" is in the LDS Church archives; it is reproduced in full in Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants" (PhD diss. Brigham Young University, 1974), p. 287–292.

¹¹*History of the Church*, 1:109–15.

¹²*Ibid.*, p. 154.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 338.

¹⁴Whitmer, p. 35, 62–7. *Olive Branch*, 2:28–9. William E. McLellin to Joseph Smith III, January 10, 1861, and July 1872; orig. mss. in archives of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Independence, Missouri.

¹⁵*History of the Church*, 1:104, 217. Orson Pratt, for example, reports in *The Seer*, p. 228, that he had personal copies of the revelations. The LDS Church Historical Department contains several small manuscript notebooks containing revelations that belonged to private individuals.

¹⁶*History of the Church*, 1:221–2, 229.

¹⁷Whitmer, p. 53–4.

¹⁸P. Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," *BYU Studies*, 12(1972):480–6.

¹⁹This chapter (D&C 19) defines "eternal punishment" as "God's punishment."

²⁰P. Crawley and R. L. Anderson, "The Political and Social Realities of Zion's Camp," *BYU Studies*, 14(1974):406–20.

²¹Whitmer, p. 55. *Ensign of Liberty of the Church of Christ* (1847), p. 6, 18, 33, 43–4. *History of the Church*, 3:32 note.

²²Crawley, "Bibliography of the Church," p. 499–503.

²³Whitmer, p. 51.

²⁴Crawley, "Bibliography of the Church," p. 496–7. "Journal of Newel Knight" Nov. 23, 1835, as quoted in Marvin S. Hill, "Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of the Causes of Kirtland Dissent," *Church History* 49(1980):291. Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs (1903); photostat of orig. typescript at Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

²⁵See Hill, *op. cit.* For a discussion of the bank see Marvin S. Hill, C. Keith Rooker and Larry T. Wimmer, "The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics," *BYU Studies*, 17(1977):387-476.

²⁶*Messenger and Advocate* (April 1837), p. 488. "Journal of Wilford Woodruff" Jan. 6, 1837, *BYU Studies*, 12(1972), p. 381.

²⁷Crawley, "Bibliography of the Church," p. 516-18. Apart from its importance in the intellectual history of Mormonism, the *Voice of Warning* was probably the most effective nineteenth century Mormon missionary tract. Before 1900 the Utah Church published twenty-four editions in English as well as editions in Danish, Dutch, French, German, Icelandic, Spanish and Swedish.

²⁸"Oliver Cowdery Letterbook" Jan. 30, 1838; orig. ms. in Huntington Library, San Marino, California.

²⁹*Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c. in Relation to the Disturbances with the Mormons* (Fayette, Missouri, 1841), p. 121. "Oliver Cowdery Letterbook" Jan. 30, 1838.

³⁰*History of the Church*, 3:1-19. "Cowdery Letterbook" Feb. 4, 1838, May 10, 1838. *Document Containing the Correspondence, Orders, &c.*, p. 102-6, 110, 120-2. Crawley, "Bibliography of the Church," p. 467-8.

³¹*Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (1874), p. 328-30.

³²*History of the Church*, 4:179, 321.

³³See, e.g., F. M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History* (New York, 1963), p. 277ff.

³⁴For example, W. W. Phelps' article in the *Messenger and Advocate* (June 1835), p. 130 alludes to the pre-existence of spirits and the eternal nature of marriage. Truman Coe's article in the *Ohio Observer* (11 Aug. 1836) shows that the Mormon concept of a corporeal anthropomorphic God existed in Kirtland; see *BYU Studies* 17(1977):347-55. Lorenzo Snow reported that his famous couplet "As man now is, God once was; as God now is, man may be," was prompted by a comment of Joseph Smith's father in Kirtland in 1836; see Eliza R. Snow, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow* (Salt Lake City, 1884), p. 9-10, 46.

³⁵In addition to those mentioned in the text, these include: Elias Higbee and Parley P. Pratt, *An Address by Judge Higbee and Parley P. Pratt . . . to the Citizens of Washington and to the Public in General* (Washington? 1840); Orson Hyde, *A Timely Warning to the People of England* (Manchester, 1840); six tracts by Parley P. Pratt—*An Address by a Minister of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, to the People of England* (Manchester, 1840), *An Answer to Mr. William Hewitt's Tract Against the Latter-day Saints* (Manchester, 1840), *An Epistle of Demetrius, Junior, the Silversmith* (Manchester, 1840), *Late Persecution of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints* (New York, 1840), *Plain Facts, Showing the Falsehood and Folly of the Rev. C. S. Bush* (Manchester, 1840), *A Reply to Mr. Thomas Taylor's "Complete Failure," &c., and Mr. Richard Livesey's "Mormonism Exposed"* (Manchester, 1840); Sidney Rigdon, *An Appeal to the American People* (Cincinnati, 1840); Erastus Snow, *E. Snow's Reply to the Self-Styled Philanthropist, of Chester County* (Philadelphia, 1840); three tracts by John Taylor—*An Answer to Some False Statements and Misrepresentations Made by the Rev. Robert Heys* (Douglas, 1840), *Calumny Refuted and the Truth Defended; Being a Reply to the Second Address of the Rev. Robert Heys* (Douglas, 1840), *Truth Defended and Methodism Weighed in the Balance and Found Wanting: Being a Reply to the Third Address of the Rev. Robert Heys* (Liverpool, 1840); Benjamin Winchester, *The Origin of the Spaulding Story* (Philadelphia, 1840).

³⁶The April 2, 1843, discourse at Ramus taught such doctrines as "whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection," and "the Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's." The April 7, 1844, discourse at Nauvoo, the famous King Follett Funeral Sermon, taught that there are many Gods, that God the Father was once as man now is and that man can become as God.

³⁷*History of the Church*, 5:215.

³⁸*Ibid.*, 5:340.

³⁹*Times and Seasons* Jan. 1, 1842.