

Joseph Smith in Hermeneutical Crisis

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Marvin Hill argued in 1989 that the fundamental problem early Mormonism was designed to address was the problem of pluralism. Pluralism, according to Hill, caused a situation of social disintegration and insecurity to which Mormons hoped to bring stability and uniformity.¹ Hill's analysis is insightful in its attention to the institutional and political issues but does not fully engage the religious dimensions of the problem.² This omission is serious, especially since many of the political and institutional divisions in the early Republic were themselves deeply rooted in religious divisions. These religious divisions, in turn, arose largely from divergent readings of the Bible.

Although Joseph Smith did endeavor to create political and institutional unity, his more fundamental project was to create religious unity. Most American Protestants of Smith's day believed the Bible was "perspicuous," or clear and self-interpreting. Religious divisions were blamed on the interference of creeds and authorities with the common sense reading of the Bible. Many believed that, if interpretation could be democratized, Christian unity would be the natural result. Actually, however, in the highly democratic environment of the early nineteenth century, interpretations of the Bible only multiplied, and new denominations only proliferated. The religious foundation of Protestant America turned out to be so much shifting sand, and the viability of the nation itself seemed threatened. Joseph Smith's project can be understood, in part, as an effort to shore up this foundation and to satisfy his frustrated longing for religious unity in his family and nation.

Put another way, early nineteenth-century Protestant America was a nation in hermeneutical crisis. The bewildering diversity of

the nation's religious marketplace meant that interpreters approached the Bible with vastly different presuppositions and therefore interpreted it in vastly different ways. More frightening still was the challenge posed by rationalism, which threatened to do away with biblical authority altogether. Joseph Smith addressed such concerns by an appeal to special revelation, by which he authoritatively clarified and interpreted the Bible for a nineteenth-century audience, with special attention to resolving contradictions and to creating continuity in salvation history. He sought, in short, to restore the Bible's perspicuity and to place its interpretation within the reach of common sense.

The Smiths Confront the Crisis

When Joseph Smith was born in Sharon, Vermont, on December 23, 1805, it was not to a virgin; there were no portents in the stars to let the world know that a prophet had been born. But if the fates did not move the heavens for the infant prophet, it may be because they were too busy moving the earth. Fawn Brodie, one of Joseph's biographers, has said of the early nineteenth century, "These pentecostal years . . . were the most fertile in history for the sprouting of prophets."³ This was an age of remarkable religious ferment: the Second Great Awakening was in full swing, and many Americans were abandoning mainline religious denominations to join upstart sects that promised, among other things, a more democratic, charismatic, and biblical faith.⁴

For Joseph Smith religious dissent was not merely a cultural phenomenon; both sides of his family had long made it a way of life.⁵ His paternal grandfather Asael Smith was a Universalist. His maternal grandfather, Solomon Mack, had spent most of his life as an atheist. Mack's wife raised their children, including Joseph Smith's mother Lucy, without formal church affiliation. Joseph's father, Joseph Sr., was also incubated largely apart from organized religion.⁶ A Universalist like Asael, he showed greater interest in folk religious practices like divination than in the activities of local evangelical churches.⁷

But if the Prophet's parents were not regular church attenders, neither were they irreligious; they simply believed that no true church existed on the earth. For Joseph Sr., this belief manifested itself in several prophetic dreams,⁸ at least one of which would later

show up in modified form in the Book of Mormon.⁹ His wife, Lucy, yearned for religious communion¹⁰ and had a dramatic conversion experience in 1803, but, upon searching for a church, found them all spiritually destitute. She was associated with the Methodists for a time in Vermont but, in the words of Richard Bushman, was both “attracted and repelled at the same time.”¹¹

The Smiths’ religiosity was sufficiently deep, in fact, to be a cause of significant conflict and tension within the family. Lucy was disturbed by her husband’s aversion to evangelical religion and was deeply concerned for his and their children’s souls. The religious rift in the family widened when their eldest son, Alvin, died in 1823. At the funeral, the Presbyterian minister Benjamin Stockton “intimated very strongly that [Alvin] had gone to hell, for [he] was not a church member.”¹² Joseph Sr. was extremely angry but Lucy reacted with fear and anguish. She actually began attending Reverend Stockton’s Presbyterian church and took most of the children with her, but the two Josephs remained aloof.¹³ This religious divide has led biographer Dan Vogel to characterize Joseph Smith Jr.’s young life primarily in terms of “family conflict.”¹⁴ Although Vogel somewhat exaggerates this theme, he is probably right that the reconciliation of his family members’ contradictory spiritual convictions was a major motivation for Joseph Smith in undertaking his prophetic career.¹⁵ Smith eventually succeeded in this goal; even his Universalist grandfather Asael accepted the Book of Mormon before his death in 1830.

The Crisis and Common Sense

The Smith family’s spiritual crisis was mirrored in the broader society. What one preacher described as a “sea of sectarian rivalries,”¹⁶ historian Nathan O. Hatch has called “a period of religious ferment, chaos, and originality unmatched in American religious history.”¹⁷ The fragmentation of what had been a relatively stable religious environment prior to the American Revolution was extremely disconcerting to religious seekers. Joseph Smith described a Palmyra, New York, revival as “a scene of great confusion and bad feeling . . . priest contending against priest, and convert against convert so that all their good feelings for one another (if ever they had any) were entirely lost in a strife of words and a contest about opinions.”¹⁸ Lucy Smith lamented: “If I re-

main a member of no church all religious people will say I am of the world; and, if I join some one of the different denominations, all the rest will say I am in error. No church will admit that I am right, except the one with which I am associated. This makes them witnesses against each other; and how can I decide in such a case as this, seeing they are all unlike the church of Christ, as it existed in former days!"¹⁹

The confusion generated by Palmyra's pluralistic religious marketplace is perhaps best epitomized in one of Joseph Smith Sr.'s dreams, in which the various denominations are represented by "all manner of beasts, horned cattle, and roaring animals" behaving in "the most threatening manner possible."²⁰

Hatch has described America's religious fragmentation as a "crisis of religious authority."²¹ The American revolutionary ethos encouraged widespread distrust of traditional sources of authority; early nineteenth-century Americans preferred to "exalt the conscience of the individual" and "called for a populist hermeneutics premised on the inalienable right of every person to understand the New Testament for him- or herself."²² The Smiths certainly were not immune to the cultural mantra of "no creed but the Bible," which Hatch calls "the distinctive feature of American religion."²³ When Lucy joined the Presbyterian church, young Joseph told his mother, "I will take my Bible and go out into the woods and learn more in two hours than you could if you were to go to meeting two years."²⁴ Lucy herself, for "a number of years" prior to Alvin's death, had remained aloof from church membership and "determined to examine my Bible . . . taking Jesus and his disciples for my guide, to endeavour to obtain from God that which man could neither give nor take away."²⁵

The confidence Joseph and Lucy initially expressed in their ability to interpret the Bible for themselves was fairly typical of the period. In the first half of the nineteenth century, the dominant American epistemology was what historians have termed Scottish Common Sense Realism.²⁶ Common Sense interpreters of the Bible placed its propositions in the same category as the empirical facts of nature. According to this perspective, the facts of scripture must be inductively observed, collected, and studied according to the same rules that scientists of the time employed in studying the natural world.²⁷ Common Sense was also, however, a

deeply populist philosophy. It emphasized that the senses provide direct and uncomplicated knowledge of the real world and that virtually anyone is capable of apprehending and understanding the facts of the Bible and nature.

One important Common Sense interpreter was the restorationist preacher Alexander Campbell. Campbell's program, like Smith's, was to resolve the crisis of pluralism and to restore Christian unity. He believed that the plurality of interpretations resulted from a lack of objectivity. Instead of relying on common sense and scientific principles, people were reading the Bible through the lenses of creeds, systems, and authorities. The way to restore Christian unity was to discard all such lenses and to make biblical interpretation a free, democratic, and scientific affair.²⁸ Said Campbell, "Were all students of the Bible taught to apply the same rules of interpretation to its pages, there would be a greater uniformity in opinion and sentiment than ever resulted from the simple adoption of a written creed."²⁹

To Campbell's credit, he understood at least some of the complexities of interpretation. His "rules of interpretation" took into account the need for literary and historical context, as well as philosophical study.³⁰ But ultimately his Common Sense epistemology overrode these scientific principles, for he argued that when one approaches the Bible with humility, ardent desire, and "soundness of [spiritual] vision," one is enabled to perceive "the *things* represented by those words . . . themselves." Thus, for the sincere but uneducated interpreter, "there is an assurance of understanding, a certainty of knowledge" that is unavailable to the "mere critic."³¹ The words of the Bible provide direct access to God and the spiritual world, just as the senses provide direct access to the natural world.

Unfortunately, Campbell's expectations proved naive; it was not long before his own movement fractured over differences of interpretation.³² This fragmentation resulted partly from the inadequacies of the Common Sense epistemology itself. True objectivity proved unattainable, scriptural "facts" proved elusive, and the mechanics of perception and memory proved more complicated and problematic than Common Sense thinkers allowed.³³ But the fractures also resulted partly from Campbell's overestimation of the abilities and resources of his followers. Historical and

philological criticism were out of reach for the vast majority of nineteenth-century Americans, and their spiritual vision was not so sound as to overcome this deficiency.

The lesson that took the Campbellites decades to learn Joseph Smith learned as a teenager. Amid the chaos of a Palmyra revival, Smith consulted the Bible and concluded, as had his parents before him, that there was no true church on the earth.³⁴ But he also expressed dissatisfaction with the principle that individuals are capable of correctly interpreting the Bible in the absence of external religious authority. He later lamented, "How to act I did not know, and unless I could get more wisdom than I then had, I would never know; for the teachers of religion of the different sects understood the same passages of scripture so differently as <to> destroy all confidence in settling the question by an appeal to the Bible."³⁵ The predictions of Common Sense philosophy simply were not borne out in the real world.

The Quest for Hermeneutical Privilege

In James 1:5 Joseph thought he detected the solution to his dilemma: "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him." Joseph took these instructions to mean that the revelation of the Holy Spirit could tell him which of the many competing interpretations was true. He obediently knelt in the woods and, after an exhausting struggle against a demonic power that assaulted him, saw a vision "above the brightness of the sun"—a vision that confirmed his suspicion that there was no true church on the earth and that instructed him to join none of them.³⁶

The notion that the Bible can be properly understood only with the help of the Holy Spirit actually was not at all new or shocking. The Presbyterian Westminster Confession, for example, acknowledged "the inward illumination of the Spirit of God to be necessary for the saving understanding of such things as are revealed in the Word."³⁷ Even scientific interpreters of the Common Sense school acknowledged that the Holy Spirit and the affections of the heart played a role in interpretation.³⁸ Where the Mormon prophet differed from the historic Protestant tradition was in making the Holy Spirit's intervention external and propositional. The very Westminster Confession that acknowledged the

role of inner illumination in interpreting the Word also insisted that God's former, propositional ways of revealing Himself had now "ceased."³⁹

In the early Republic, however, even this cessationist consensus had largely broken down. As visions, prophecies, and other miraculous experiences proliferated, a vigorous national debate erupted between proponents of the revivals and their establishment anti-revivalist critics. This war was waged in both Calvinist and Arminian circles with equal vehemence.⁴⁰ As a resident of the Burned-Over District and a sometime attender of camp revival meetings, Joseph Smith was probably more familiar with the revival tradition than the anti-revival tradition. He apparently did not consider his vision, which in the earliest accounts sounds like a fairly typical conversion experience of that period, to be unprecedented or out of keeping with the religious climate of his day.⁴¹ Thus, he was surprised when he related his experience to a Methodist minister to find that the minister was a cessationist: "I was greatly surprised at his behavior; he treated my communication not only lightly, but with great contempt, saying it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles, and that there would never be any more of them."⁴²

Part of the problem, probably, was that religious dissidents across the country were claiming dreams and visions in support of views that were substantially out of step with the Protestant clerical establishment. Radical prophets like Ann Lee, theological liberals like the Universalist Caleb Rich, and even illiterate blacks whose names are lost to history all claimed to have received by special revelation the true interpretation of the scriptures.⁴³ Anti-revivalist preachers believed that the "enthusiasm" of these credulous people was largely to blame for the theological chaos that afflicted the frontier. They denounced dreams and visions with the same vehemence that the visionaries directed against the creeds. Perhaps without intending to, Joseph Smith had become a combatant in one of the most bitter theological conflicts of his day.

The side of this conflict that the young Prophet had chosen, however, was a clamor of competing voices. All of them agreed in their critique of the establishment's rational hermeneutic, but each of them offered dramatically differing visions of what the Bi-

ble truly meant. Joseph Smith needed to find a way to privilege his own revealed knowledge over that of the other competitors. He initially accomplished this goal by grounding it in concrete objects: specifically, seer stones and golden plates.

Joseph Smith Jr., his father, and his older brother Alvin were all involved in money-digging during the 1820s using hazel divining rods, seer stones, magic circles, and a variety of other folk religious practices. None of them ever succeeded in obtaining any treasures, despite many expeditions. Failures were attributed to the intervention of treasure guardian spirits which, if not properly appeased, would cause the treasure to slip through the earth away from the money diggers' eager shovels. Joseph nevertheless proved exceptionally talented at demonstrating his scrying abilities to neighbors by describing distant locations that he had seen in his stone and by finding lost objects.⁴⁴

As a scryer, Smith referred to his magical stones as "keys" to special knowledge. His mother reported that it was because Joseph "possessed certain keys by which he could discern things invisible to the natural eye" that money digger Josiah Stowell hired him to help locate a Spanish mine in Chenango County.⁴⁵ When Smith received from an angel a pair of large stone spectacles that functioned in much the same way as his seer stones, he referred to these also as a "key" and claimed that by them he could "ascertain, at any time, the approach of danger, either to himself or the Record [i.e. the Book of Mormon plates]."⁴⁶ Smith's Palmyra neighbor William Stafford reported that Smith believed the hills were full of such keys, and periodically divined their locations.⁴⁷ With such objects, Joseph reportedly "could see everything—past, present, and future."⁴⁸

There could have been no more effective way for Joseph Smith to reach his most immediate audience, his family and neighbors, than to link his hermeneutical views to his well-established credentials as a scryer. The Smiths' distinctive blend of religion and folk-magic led them to view their scrying abilities as a gift from God. At the 1826 trial of Joseph Jr. for "glass-looking" and disorderly conduct, Joseph Sr. testified that "both he and his son were mortified that this wonderful power which God had so miraculously given him should be used only in search of filthy lucre." He further added that "his constant prayer to his Heavenly

Father was to manifest His will concerning this marvelous power.”⁴⁹ Similarly, an 1829 revelation addressed to Oliver Cowdery stated that Oliver had “the gift of working with the rod” and that this “rod of nature” could be an instrument of revelation, since it worked by the power of God.⁵⁰

In using divinatory instruments to receive revelation, Joseph felt he was doing only what the biblical patriarchs had done. In 1835 he altered his 1829 revelation to Oliver, replacing references to the “rod of nature” with the more ambiguous phrase “gift of Aaron,” which suggests that he took Aaron’s miraculous rod as a biblical precedent.⁵¹ Joseph had already identified himself with Moses (and Oliver Cowdery with Aaron) five years earlier, and a reference in the Book of Mormon to Moses being given “power in a rod” (2 Ne. 3:17) suggests that, probably by this time, he was already taking biblical rods as a precedent for his own activities.⁵² The same Book of Mormon passage identifies Smith closely with Joseph of Egypt, who used a silver cup in divination (Gen. 44:5). Similarly, Smith apparently took the biblical Urim and Thummim as a precedent for the seer stones that his father and neighbors used. Joseph Sr.’s mortification that his son’s scrying ability should be used only for “filthy lucre” also suggests biblical influence. If the family really believed that Joseph Jr. could see things in his stone, then biblical denunciations of the pursuit of “filthy lucre” (1 Tim. 3:3, 8; Tit 1:7, 11; 1 Pet. 5:2) may have persuaded them that Providence had some greater purpose in mind for his gift than mere money-digging.

Whatever other knowledge Joseph could obtain through his keys, the function upon which he soon fixated was the translation and interpretation of ancient records. The Book of Mormon tellingly referred to Smith’s stone spectacles as “interpreters” and told of ancient seers who used them in translation (Mosiah 8:11–19). Since Smith believed that the Bible had not been entirely “translated correctly” (Eighth Article of Faith), it is significant that he armed himself with the tools to correct the problem. He was equally determined to correct problems of transmission and interpretation (1 Ne. 13:26, 40; Alma 41:1). Many other writers of Smith’s day had claimed to be able to provide the “keys” to the sticky problem of biblical interpretation, but Smith’s keys were uniquely tangible.⁵³

Smith continued to claim the keys to authoritatively interpret the Bible until the end of his life. Significantly, however, the claim underwent a subtle transformation over time. As Smith matured, the physical instruments of revelation became unnecessary, and the terminology of “keys” was transferred to an intangible priesthood.⁵⁴ Smith’s scriptures referred to the Melchizedek Priesthood as the “key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God” (D&C 84:19). Like his stones, the priesthood empowered him to know “things as they are, and as they were, and as they are to come” (D&C 93:24). The motivation for this change from tangible to intangible keys seems partly that, as his audience broadened beyond the folk religious circles of his youth, his involvement in magic became a public relations liability. Partly, however, it is because he no longer needed concrete objects to ground his hermeneutical privilege. His vigorous personal charisma as a prophet had eclipsed the props of seership.

Closing the Distance

The plurality of biblical readings that had so bewildered the young Joseph Smith largely resulted from the psychic distance between the readers and authors of the biblical text. Most nineteenth-century interpreters took for granted that the goal of reading a text is to understand the meaning its author intended. Friedrich Schleiermacher, a German theologian who lived and wrote contemporaneously with Joseph Smith, dreamed of understanding biblical texts “even better than” their authors.⁵⁵ A major obstacle to such understanding, however, was that readers’ assumptions can never be fully in harmony with those of authors, so that readers and authors often understand the same words and phrases in dramatically different ways. The greater the cultural and linguistic distance between readers and authors, the more difficult interpretation becomes. For nineteenth-century interpreters of the Bible, the distance was vast.

Schleiermacher, like Campbell, was aware of this problem and hoped to close the psychic distance between readers and authors by means of careful historical and philological work.⁵⁶ But such tools were unavailable to most nineteenth-century interpreters of the Bible, and even Schleiermacher understood that they were not a panacea. Unlike Campbell, he did not trust in “common

sense” or direct spiritual perception to make up the difference. He argued that only by painstakingly reading and rereading the biblical texts can interpreters hope to gradually and imperfectly bring their pre-understandings into agreement with those of the authors.⁵⁷ He somewhat pessimistically referred to this process as “divination.” Divination for Schleiermacher was not a supernatural activity, but rather consisted of intuitively imagining what was in the mind of the author by extrapolating from one’s own human experience.

Joseph Smith, too, had found in divination a remedy for his distance from the biblical authors. Although his divination was ostensibly more literal than Schleiermacher’s, some textual and historical evidence suggests that it actually functioned in much the same way. He acquired and employed historical-critical and linguistic tools in his biblical interpretation, such as the writings of Josephus and a knowledge of ancient Hebrew.⁵⁸ And he also engaged in the same reading and rereading of biblical passages that Schleiermacher advocated, with each reading correcting his prior understandings in light of new knowledge and insight. He produced three different versions of the Genesis creation narrative, for example, each departing from its predecessor in subtle but very significant ways.⁵⁹

However Smith’s divination functioned, he consistently used it to facilitate biblical interpretation for his followers by reinforcing biblical authority, recontextualizing biblical passages, revising biblical language, and reliving biblical narratives. All of these strategies were designed to close the psychic distance between the Bible’s authors and its nineteenth-century readers, by transporting either the former into the present or the latter into the past.

The first plank in Smith’s response to his culture’s hermeneutical crisis was the Book of Mormon. To a large degree the Book of Mormon can be read as a witness and support for the Bible. It has a strongly biblical flavor; it is couched, in fact, in the Jacobean idiom of the King James Bible.⁶⁰ It is no coincidence that many of its detractors referred to it as the “Gold Bible.”⁶¹ One of the initial motivations behind its publication appears to have been to fulfill the Hebraic legal requirement for “two or three witnesses” to establish a matter (Deut. 19:15; Matt. 18:16; 2 Cor. 13:1).⁶² It is an American record that complements and supports the message of the “re-

cord of the Jews" (the Bible) (1 Ne. 13:23–34, 39; Mormon 7:8).⁶³ Doctrine and Covenants 27:5, one of Joseph Smith's early revelations, in fact, calls the Book of Mormon "the stick of Ephraim," which is joined with the "stick of Judah" (the Bible) in fulfillment of Ezekiel 37:19.⁶⁴ Biblical allusions and quotations are scattered throughout the Book of Mormon's pages, sometimes in the sort of haphazard and almost accidental way in which they also appear in Joseph Smith's personal writings.⁶⁵

If one of the purposes of the Book of Mormon was to prove that the message of the Bible was true, another was to clarify that message for a modern audience. That Joseph Smith rejected the Protestant doctrine of the sufficiency of the Bible is evident from the prophet Nephi's mockery of latter-day "Gentiles" who say, "A Bible, we have got a Bible, and we need no more Bible" (2 Ne. 29:3, 6).⁶⁶ The Book of Mormon quotes lengthy Bible passages, including several chapters from Isaiah, Malachi, and Matthew. The prophetic passages, especially, are recontextualized and reinterpreted in light of latter-day events. Isaiah's "isles of the sea" are identified with America, and the gathering of Israel is expected to occur on this continent as well as in Jerusalem.⁶⁷ Joseph depicts the gathering and cataclysmic judgment predicted by the biblical prophets as imminent events. Indeed, on April 21, 1834, Joseph Smith reportedly said, "Take away the book of Mormon . . . and where is our religion? We have none; for . . . [despite] our former professions and our great love for the bible, we must fall, we cannot stand, we cannot be saved; for God will gather out his saints from the gentiles and then comes desolation or destruction and none can escape except the pure in heart who are gathered, &c."⁶⁸

Other biblical passages quoted in the Book of Mormon are set in contexts designed to clarify their import for nineteenth-century political and theological debates over such issues as infant baptism, unconditional election, freemasonry, universalism, and missionary efforts to Native Americans. Alexander Campbell famously criticized the Book of Mormon as addressing "almost every error and almost every truth discussed in New York in the last ten years."⁶⁹ Mormon elder W. W. Phelps said more approvingly that the Book of Mormon "explains the Bible."⁷⁰ If the hermeneutical process requires common ground between reader and text, the Book of Mormon makes the process easier by providing

unambiguous points of contact between the Bible and the Mormons' nineteenth-century worldview.

Joseph framed his concerns about the difficulty of biblical interpretation in terms of *translation*. The eighth LDS Article of Faith affirms the Bible only "as far as it is translated correctly." The problem was not merely the presence of errors in the King James translation but also its lack of plainness. "Because the words of Isaiah are not plain unto you," the prophet Nephi explained in the Book of Mormon, "I proceed with mine own prophecy, according to my plainness; in the which I know that no man can err" (2 Ne. 25:4, 7). Thus the Book of Mormon at once challenged and rescued the notion that Common Sense can enable anyone to easily understand the Bible. The Bible was difficult to understand in its present form, but the Book of Mormon would translate its message into plain, nineteenth-century language. "My soul delighteth in plainness," Nephi said in good Common Sense fashion, "for after this manner doth the Lord God work among the children of men. For the Lord God giveth light unto the understanding; for he speaketh unto men according to their language, unto their understanding" (2 Ne. 31:3). Later in his career, Smith actually produced his own inspired translation of the Bible in cooperation with Sidney Rigdon.⁷¹

Smith did not stop at recontextualization and retranslation; the Bible was also in need of revision. Smith agreed with the pervasive Protestant belief in a medieval "great apostasy" but went further than most in suggesting that the Catholic Church had modified the Bible, removing "many plain and precious parts" (1 Ne. 13:26, 32, 34). Smith was not the first to make this accusation. Thomas Paine's *Age of Reason*, which Joseph Smith's father and grandfather had both apparently read and been influenced by,⁷² wondered whether designing persons had "added, altered, abridged, or dressed . . . up" the books of the Bible. Paine also asserted that the Bible was created by a majority vote and that it was only on this authority that several books were rejected.⁷³ Thomas Jefferson, though he blamed the gospel writers rather than the Catholics, readily modified the biblical text in order to extract the core of the gospel from the "rubbish" that framed it.⁷⁴

The Prophet Joseph addressed these difficulties by extensively revising a number of biblical passages. About half of the verses

quoted in the Book of Mormon from Isaiah follow the King James Version word for word, but in the other half are hundreds of apparently deliberate revisions.⁷⁵ The same phenomenon occurs in the lengthy sections quoted from the Sermon on the Mount and from Malachi. The Prophet's later undertakings, like his "Inspired Version" of the Bible and his books of Moses and Abraham, extend this effort. Many of the changes stem from Joseph's suspicion of the King James translation, in that they omit or alter words that the King James Version (sometimes unnecessarily) italicizes.⁷⁶ Others are more substantive. Some, for example, are concerned to fill theological or narrative gaps. Joseph restored the lost Book of Enoch referred to in Jude and inserted it into his book of Moses, now part of the LDS canon.⁷⁷ Other revisions alter difficult passages and/or harmonize apparent contradictions in the text. For example, Joseph addressed the discrepancies between Genesis 1 and 2, by making Genesis 1 a spiritual pre-creation event, while Genesis 2 referred to the physical creation.⁷⁸ And finally, in some cases, the Prophet showed a concern to harmonize the biblical text with his own experience of revealed truth.⁷⁹

Joseph Smith's most intriguing revision of biblical salvation history is his Christianization of the Old Testament. H. Michael Marquardt has identified 200 New Testament quotations in the portion of the Book of Mormon that was supposedly written in the pre-Christian era.⁸⁰ The Book of Mormon's pre-Christian Saints worship Christ by name and baptize people for the remission of sins. Philip Barlow has suggested that this phenomenon was an expression of the Enlightenment assumption that truth is unchanging.⁸¹ It is interesting to see Joseph Smith associated with this assumption, since it was a central conviction of the Common Sense philosophy that he and so many others had found wanting.⁸² In many respects, Joseph Smith appears to have rejected this static view of truth. He held to a very flexible ethic,⁸³ introduced new scriptures and doctrines, and eventually taught a doctrine of eternal progression. He also held, like many Protestants of his day, that history could be understood as a series of progressive dispensations.

Yet Barlow is correct that all of Smith's innovations and novelties were actually designed to demonstrate that there *were* no innovations and novelties—that, in fact, progression itself was as ancient

as the universe. Though there have been many dispensations, the same core truths have been taught in all of them, and the same symbols and events have recurred over and over again. Just as John the Baptist had been a forerunner of Jesus, the Campbellite preacher Sidney Rigdon was a forerunner of Joseph Smith (D&C 35:4). Just as Elijah appeared to Jesus at the Transfiguration, so Elijah appeared to Joseph Smith at the dedication of the Kirtland Temple.⁸⁴ Just as Moses had Aaron as his spokesman, Joseph Smith had Oliver Cowdery (2 Ne. 3:17–18).⁸⁵ Just as the Israelites had priesthoods, temples, polygamy, and animal sacrifice, so the new dispensation included them.⁸⁶ When Joseph introduced the new doctrine of the plurality of gods, he pointedly insisted not only that he had taught it from the very beginning of his ministry, but also that it had been the teaching of Jesus and Moses.⁸⁷ Joseph thus united the two great competing myths of his day: the immutability of truth and the inevitable march of progress.

This union of stasis and progress was also a union of ancient and modern. Mormon restorationism, with its radical reenactment of biblical narratives and its appropriation of biblical polity, sought the identification of readers and authors to a degree that Protestant interpreters like Campbell and Schleiermacher never conceived. Joseph radically thrust together the worlds of the biblical patriarchs and his own nineteenth-century American followers. It was perhaps the most thoroughgoing and successful of his several strategies to close the psychic distance and to facilitate interpretation for his followers.

Conclusion

Joseph Smith witnessed in his culture and family the divisive effects of a crisis of authority that sprang from the inadequacy of Common Sense hermeneutical assumptions. Rather than try to alter these deeply rooted cultural assumptions, he used his own complement of prophetic tools to reshape biblical history and to craft it into the kind of consistent, coherent, and easily understandable narrative that the Common Sense philosophy predicted. By these means he hoped to restore unity in the face of theological and social disintegration.

Whether Joseph Smith's project actually enabled anyone to more accurately understand the intent of the biblical authors is

debatable. At the very least, however, he did succeed in making biblical interpretation *seem* simple and straightforward to his followers. Thus, despite his initial skepticism about the adequacy of Common Sense, he rescued it in the end. He rendered the Bible sufficiently clear to his nineteenth-century followers that they could proclaim in the *Times and Seasons*, “The prophetic and doctrinal writings contained in the Bible are mostly adapted to the capacities of the simple and unlearned—to the common sense of the people.”⁸⁸

Notes

1. Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989), xi.

2. Grant Underwood has leveled a similar criticism against those who see Mormon millenarianism as a reaction to economic and political deprivation. Underwood sees Mormonism as a protest against a fundamentally spiritual kind of deprivation: “Here was deprivation as keenly felt as any lack of physical sustenance.” Grant Underwood, “Early Mormon Millenarianism: Another Look,” *Church History* 54, no. 2 (June 1985): 224–25; Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1993), 97.

3. Fawn Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith*, 2d ed., rev. and enl. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1983), 15.

4. *Ibid.*, 11–15; Nathan O. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1989), 3–1, 179–83.

5. Richard L. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 3, actually forgoes “an all-encompassing social or cultural analysis” on the basis that “young Joseph’s culture was predominantly family culture.”

6. *Ibid.*, 5.

7. Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004), 35–52.

8. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 38–39.

9. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History*, 58. Several Latter-day Saint authors have objected to the suggestion that the Book of Mormon is dependent on Joseph Sr.’s dream, preferring to find precedents in ancient sources. See, for example, C. Wilfred Griggs, “The Book of Mormon as an Ancient Book,” *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 259 note 4; John W. Welch, “The Narrative of Zosimus and the Book of Mormon,” *BYU Studies* 22, no. 3 (Summer 1982): 311–32.

10. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 18.
11. *Ibid.*, 38.
12. J. W. Peterson, "Wm. B. Smith's Last Statement," *Zion's Ensign* 5, no. 3 (January 13, 1894): 6, in Dan Vogel, ed., *Early Mormon Documents*, 5 vols. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996–2003), 1:512–13.
13. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 39; Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, 58.
14. Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, xx–xxi.
15. *Ibid.*, 42, 44–45, 50–51.
16. Julian M. Sturtevant Jr., ed., *Julian M. Sturtevant: An Autobiography* (New York: Fleming H. Revell Co., 1896), 160–61.
17. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 64.
18. Joseph Smith, Manuscript History of the Church, Book A–1, LDS Church History Library, CR 100 102, 2, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:59.
19. Lucy Mack Smith, *Biographical Sketches of Joseph Smith the Prophet, and His Progenitors for Many Generations* (Liverpool: S. W. Richards, 1853), 37.
20. *Ibid.*, 57.
21. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 114.
22. *Ibid.*, 70–73. See also Philip L. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible: The Place of the Latter-day Saints in American Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), 7–10.
23. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 81. Mark A. Noll, *The Civil War as a Theological Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 23, notes that the Bible served as a sort of Christian Constitution. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 9, goes further still: "In America the Bible had been reCanonized . . . as a symbol of the 'Redeemer Nation.' To denigrate the Bible was to denigrate the country."
24. Lucy Mack Smith, Preliminary Manuscript, LDS Church History Library, 50, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:307.
25. Lucy nevertheless continued to "hear all that could be said, as well as read much that was written, on the subject of religion" and found a priest who would baptize her without making any denominational commitments. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 47. Her rejection of human religious authorities clearly was not as thoroughgoing as her husband's and son's.
26. George M. Marsden, *Fundamentalism and American Culture*, 2d ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 14–16.

27. C. Leonard Allen, "Baconianism and the Bible in the Disciples of Christ: James S. Lamar and 'the Organon of Scripture,'" *Church History* 55, no. 1 (March 1986): 67-71.

28. Alexander Campbell, "Reply," *Christian Baptist* 3, no. 9 (April 3, 1826): 229. See also Nathan O. Hatch, "The Christian Movement and the Demand for a Theology of the People," *Journal of American History* 67, no. 3 (December 1980): 559-60.

29. Alexander Campbell, *Christian Baptism: With Its Antecedents and Consequents* (London: Arthur Hall, Virtue and Co., 1853), 49-50.

30. Alexander Campbell, "Tracts for the People—No. III: The Bible—Principles of Interpretation," *Millennial Harbinger* 3, no. 1 (January 1846): 23.

31. *Ibid.*, 24; emphasis his.

32. Allen, "Baconianism and the Bible," 77-79.

33. Some sophisticated thinkers were aware of these problems even at the time of the Common Sense philosophy's initial promulgation. See Joseph Priestley, *An Examination of Dr. Reid's Inquiry into the Human Mind on the Principles of Common Sense, Dr. Beattie's Essay on the Nature and Immutability of Truth, and Dr. Oswald's Appeal to Common Sense in Behalf of Religion*, 2d ed. (London: J. Johnson, 1775).

34. "A History of the Life of Joseph Smith Jr," 1832, 2, in Joseph Smith Letter Book 1, LDS Church History Library, MS 155, Box 2, fd. 1, in *Selected Collections from the Archives of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 1:20.

35. Smith, Manuscript History, 1-2, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:60. Smith's contemporary John W. Nevin made a similar observation: John W. Nevin, "Antichrist and the Sect System," in *The Mercersberg Theology*, edited by James Hastings Nichols (New York: Library of Protestant Thought, 1966), 97-99.

36. Smith, Manuscript History, 3, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:60-61.

37. Westminster Confession of Faith, 1647, 1:6 in Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom with a History and Critical Notes*, 3 vols. (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1877), 3:603-4.

38. George M. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter? The Bible, Science, and Authority in Mid-Nineteenth-Century America," in *The Bible in America: Essays in Cultural History*, edited by Nathan O. Hatch and Mark A. Noll (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982), 84-85.

39. Westminster Confession, 1647, 1:1, in Schaff, *Creeds of Christendom*, 600.

40. Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2007), 117–37; James D. Bratt, *Antirevivalism in Antebellum America: A Collection of Religious Voices* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2006).

41. On the First Vision as a conversion narrative, see Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 6.

42. Smith, Manuscript History, 3, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:61. Methodists of the 1820s were generally open to supernatural experiences and anti-denominational iconoclasm and, in fact, were the primary engineers of the interdenominational frontier camp meeting revivals. Anti-revival sentiment had begun to take root in some Methodist circles, however, and within a few decades would claim a large proportion of their clergy. See, for example, “Wesleyan Methodist” John F. Watson’s Tract, *Methodist Error; or Friendly Christian Advice, to Those Methodists, Who Indulge in Extravagant Religious Emotions and Bodily Exercises* (Trenton, N.J.: D. & E. Fenton, 1819).

43. Caleb Rich, “A Narrative of Elder Caleb Rich,” *Candid Examiner* 2, no. 23 (May 14, 1827): 185–87; George P. Rawick, ed., *The American Slave*, 41 vols. (Nashville, Tenn.: Fisk University Social Science Institute, 1945), 19:209.

44. Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, 39–40.

45. Smith, *Biographical Sketches*, 92.

46. *Ibid.*, 106.

47. Testimony of William Stafford, December 8, 1833, in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled: Or, a Faithful Account of That Singular Imposition and Delusion, from Its Rise to the Present Time* (Painesville, Ohio: Telegraph Press, 1834), 237.

48. Fayette Lapham, “Interview with the Father of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, Forty Years Ago. His Account of Finding the Sacred Plates,” *Historical Magazine*, 2d series, 7 (May 1870): 307, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:463.

49. William D. Purple, “Joseph Smith, the Originator of Mormonism,” *Chenango Union* 30, no. 33 (May 2, 1877), 3.

50. *A Book of Commandments for the Government of the Church of Christ, Organized According to Law, on the 6th of April, 1830* (Zion: W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833), 7:3, in Wilford C. Wood, ed., *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Wilford C. Wood, 1958–62), 2:19.

51. *Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints: Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God* (Kirtland, Ohio: F. G. Williams and Co., 1835), 34:3, in Wood, *Joseph Smith Begins His Work*,

2:161–62. The motive for the change appears to have been to disassociate himself from his early magical practices, which proved embarrassing as early as the late 1820s and which were used to publicly discredit his religious activities by 1830. See Obadiah Dogberry, “The Book of Pukei—Chap. 1,” *The Reflector* 3, no. 5 (June 12, 1830): 36–37, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:231–234; Vogel, *The Making of a Prophet*, 92–93; Donna Hill, *Joseph Smith: The First Mormon* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1977), 68–69; Clay L. Chandler, “Scrying for the Lord: Magic, Mysticism, and the Book of Mormon,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003): 78.

52. Mark Ashurst-McGee, “A Pathway to Prophethood: Joseph Smith Junior as Rodsman, Village Seer, and Judeo-Christian Prophet” (M.A. thesis, Utah State University, 2000), 142; Richard P. Howard, “Latter Day Saint Scriptures and the Doctrine of Propositional Revelation,” in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990), 1–18; Susan Staker, “Secret Things, Hidden Things: The Seer Story in the Imaginative Economy of Joseph Smith,” in *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon*, edited by Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfé (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 235–74. Joseph Smith Sr.’s brother Jesse wrote a derogatory letter in 1829 that referred to Joseph Sr.’s implement as “a wand or rod like Jannes & Jambres,” the Egyptian magicians who opposed Moses (Ex. 7:11–12; 2 Tim. 3:8). Jesse Smith, Letter to Hyrum Smith, June 17, 1829, in Joseph Smith Letter Book 2, LDS Church History Library, MS 155, Box 2, fd. 2, 59–61, in *Selected Collections*, 1:20. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. and enl. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 38, notes that it was not unusual for a dowser to refer to his or her implement as a “Rod of Aaron” or “Mosaical Rod.”

53. See, for example, Robert Gray and Thomas Percy, *A Key to the Holy Bible, Giving an Account of the Several Books, Their Contents, Their Authors, and of the Times, Places, and Occasions on Which They Were Respectively Written*, 2d ed. (London: C. and J. Rivington, 1825).

54. Orson Pratt, “Two Days’ Meeting at Brigham City, June 27 and 28, 1874,” *Millennial Star* 36, no. 32 (August 11, 1874): 498–99, <http://contentdm.lib.byu.edu/u?/MStar,13925> (accessed January 7, 2010).

55. Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics: The Handwritten Manuscripts*, edited by Heinz Kimmerle, translated by James Duke and Jack Forstman, Vol. 1 of the AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION TEXTS AND TRANSLATION SERIES, edited by Robert Ellwood Jr. (Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 112–13.

56. Anthony C. Thistleton, *New Horizons in Hermeneutics: The Theory*

and *Practice of Transforming Biblical Reading* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 1997), 222–23.

57. The term “pre-understanding” actually derives from Schleiermacher’s popularizer Wilhelm Dilthey, but it communicates well Schleiermacher’s meaning. Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics*, 56, 59, 150–51. For a wonderful summary of how Dilthey’s formulation follows from Schleiermacher’s slightly more complicated one, see Martin E. Marty, “Two Integrities: An Address to the Crisis in Mormon Historiography,” in *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, edited by George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 182.

58. Louis C. Zucker, “Joseph Smith as a Student of Hebrew,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1968): 41–55.

59. Anthony A. Hutchinson, “A Mormon Midrash? LDS Creation Narratives Reconsidered,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 21, no. 4 (Winter 1988): 11–74.

60. Joseph’s imitation of King James idiom is imperfect; he occasionally misuses personal pronouns and sometimes even lapses back into regular nineteenth-century speech patterns. Wesley P. Walters, “The Use of the Old Testament in the Book of Mormon” (M.A. thesis, Covenant Theological Seminary, 1981), 163; Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 27. He also tends to exaggerate the use of certain forms—for example, the emphatic construction “I did go up unto,” as opposed to “I went up unto.” My own computer study reveals that most biblical books use the word “did” very infrequently—only Habakkuk uses it more than three times per thousand words. The Book of Mormon, by contrast, exhibits extraordinarily high rates of occurrence per thousand words in four books: 4 Nephi (23.64), Ether (12.26), Mormon (11.87), and Helaman (11.86). Only 2 Nephi (1.29), Jacob (2.08), and Moroni (2.61) use “did” fewer than five times per thousand words.

61. Abner Cole, “Gold Bible,” *The Reflector* 1, no. 15 (December 9, 1829): 57, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:228.

62. Don Bradley, “Making Witnesses: The Book of Mormon’s Secular Strength,” Paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, August 2007, recording available from https://www.sunstonemagazine.com/shop/products/?product_id=2803&category=3.

63. Craig J. Hazen, “The Apologetic Impulse in Early Mormonism: The Historical Roots of the New Mormon Challenge,” in *The New Mormon Challenge*, edited by Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Zondervan, 2002), 49–51; A. Bruce Lindgren, “Sign or Scripture: Approaches to the Book of Mormon,” in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, edited by Dan Vogel (Salt Lake

City: Signature Books, 1990), 55–62; Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002), 62–88; Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 26, 27.

64. Ezekiel 37:19 reads, “Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will take the stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand” (KJV italics removed). Smith also very early came to see the coming forth of the Book of Mormon as a direct fulfillment of Isaiah 29:1–4, 10–12. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 20.

65. *Ibid.*, 14, 25. See also Joseph Smith, Letter to the Colesville Saints, August 28, 1830, in Newel Knight, Journal, ca. 1846 (in private possession), 59–61, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 1:11–15.

66. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 39, 40.

67. Walters, “The Use of the Old Testament,” 167–68. This was fairly typical fare for the early Republic. Mark Noll, “The Image of the United States as a Biblical Nation, 1776–1865,” in Hatch and Noll, *The Bible in America*, 40–45.

68. Fred C. Collier and William S. Harwell, eds., *Kirtland Council Minute Book*, 2d ed. (Salt Lake City: Collier’s Publishing, 2002), 37.

69. Alexander Campbell, “The Mormonites,” *Millennial Harbinger* 2, no. 2 (February 1831): 93. See also Clyde D. Ford, “Lehi on the Great Issues: Book of Mormon Theology in Early Nineteenth-Century Perspective,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 38, no. 4 (Winter 2005): 75–96.

70. W. W. Phelps, Letter to William Smith, December 25, 1844, *Times and Seasons* 5, no. 24 (January 1, 1845): 757, <http://www.centerplace.org/history/ts/v5n24.htm> (accessed January 6, 2010).

71. Alexander Campbell and Noah Webster also both produced new translations of the Bible; Mormons were aware of Webster’s translation at least as early as 1833. Philip L. Barlow, “Joseph Smith’s Revision of the Bible: Fraudulent, Pathologic, or Prophetic?” *Harvard Theological Review* 83, no. 1 (January 1990): 52.

72. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and Beginnings of Mormonism*, 38.

73. Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason* (New York: G. N. Devries, 1827 [1794–1807]), 15.

74. Jaroslav Pelikan, *Jesus through the Centuries: His Place in the History of Culture* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1999), 191–92.

75. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 30.

76. The King James Version italicizes words supplied by the transla-

tors. The italicization, however, is inconsistent and does not follow any clear methodology. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision," 56; David P. Wright, "Isaiah in the Book of Mormon: Or Joseph Smith in Isaiah," in *American Apocrypha*, edited by Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002), 157-234.

77. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision of the Bible," 52.

78. Ibid.; Hutchinson, "A Mormon Midrash?" 36.

79. Barlow, "Joseph Smith's Revision," 56.

80. H. Michael Marquardt, "The Use of the Bible in the Book of Mormon," *Journal of Pastoral Practice* 2, no. 2 (1978): 118-32.

81. Barlow, *Mormons and the Bible*, 38.

82. Marsden, "Everyone One's Own Interpreter?" 81.

83. Joseph Smith, Letter to Nancy Rigdon, ca. 1842, in Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2002), 537.

84. Rand H. Packer, "Dispensation of the Fulness of Times," in *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan Publishing, 1992), 1:387-88; Samuel Brown, "The Prophet Elias Puzzle," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 39, no. 2 (Summer 2006): 1-17.

85. This prophecy seems to have initially referred to Oliver Cowdery, but Sidney Rigdon soon displaced him in the role of "spokesman," and Cowdery's role was revised as "scribe" (D&C 100:9, 11). Oliver Cowdery, Introduction to blessings, September 1835, Patriarchal Blessing Book, LDS Church History Library, 1:8-9, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents*, 2:451-54.

86. That Joseph Smith and later Brigham Young were planning to reinstitute animal sacrifice is fairly clear. What is not clear is whether they ever actually did so. Wandle Mace and John C. Bennett both report that Joseph Smith did. Wandle Mace, *Autobiography of Wandle Mace, 1809-46*, typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections and Manuscripts Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, 39; John C. Bennett, "Further Mormon Developments!! 2d Letter from Gen. Bennett," *Sangamo Journal* 10, no. 47 (July 15, 1842), <http://www.sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/IL/sang1842.htm> (accessed January 6, 2010).

87. Joseph Smith, Sermon, June 16, 1844, in Lyndon W. Cook and Andrew F. Ehat, eds., *Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1996), 378-79.

88. Elias Higbee and Parley P. Pratt, "An Address," *Times and Seasons* 1, no. 5 (March 1840): 68, <http://www.centerplace.org/history/ts/v1n05.htm> (accessed January 6, 2010).