

A grayscale painting of two men in a field. One man is kneeling in the foreground, wearing a light-colored shirt and dark pants, looking down at something in his hands. The other man stands behind him, also in a light shirt, looking on. In the background, a church with a tall steeple sits atop a hill under a cloudy sky.

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FIG. 1. At age twenty-six, Joseph Smith (1805–1844) established the United Firm, a business management company that coordinated Church properties from 1832 to 1834. With others, Joseph Smith directed the firm, which managed mercantile and printing interests, acquired land in Ohio and Missouri, and laid plans for establishing two Latter-day Saint cities. This portrait of Joseph Smith was painted about eleven years after he organized the United Firm. Courtesy Community of Christ Library Archives, Independence, Missouri. Photograph by Val Brinkerhoff.

Joseph Smith and the United Firm

The Growth and Decline of the Church's First Master Plan of Business and Finance, Ohio and Missouri, 1832–1834

Max H Parkin

A year after Joseph Smith organized the Church, the young prophet began to gather about him a management team that helped direct the Church's early business affairs. These officers assisted him before the principal quorums of Church leadership were formed or fully developed. This growing board of managers printed the first collection of Joseph Smith's revelations; planned for the new city of Zion and its temples, as it did for Kirtland; operated the Lord's storehouses; and fostered other commercial interests. These members, directed by revelations given to Joseph Smith, formed a sometimes little-understood business partnership or firm through which they functioned. Diverse aspects of the firm are here brought together to enable those interested in early Church history to better understand it as a whole. Thus, to examine the wide scope of the firm, its influence, and particularly the complex revelation (now D&C 104) that discontinued it is the focus of this article.

While Latter-day Saints may not typically think of Joseph Smith as an energetic businessman or an assertive entrepreneur, multiple business interests captured his attention beginning shortly after the Church was organized. By February 1831 in Kirtland, Ohio, he began to inquire about economic matters, and by July, the twenty-five-year-old Joseph Smith embarked on a path of land acquisition, community planning, and other commercial ventures. He operated his businesses under the principles of consecration and stewardship and coordinated his enterprises through a business management company he named the United Firm. He supervised the firm by revelation, including a final lengthy revelation in April 1834

To view additional reference material for this article, see the online version at www.byustudies.byu.edu.

that terminated the company.¹ Most of the revelations about the firm he then published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, cautiously substituting an array of replacement words or unusual pseudonyms not found in their manuscript copies. These words, which had a tendency to obscure the company's activities, replaced the names of the firm's officers, businesses, and operational details. Most notably, the Church leader replaced the company's name with what Orson Pratt called a new "fictitious" title—the United Order. And, using another pseudonym, Joseph renamed the revelation that terminated the firm "Revelation given to Enoch," which later added to its misunderstanding. Confusion increased, inadvertently perhaps, when in territorial Utah, Brigham Young borrowed the firm's pseudonym for a new pioneer enterprise of his own—the Utah United Order. For some, Brigham's reuse of the substitute title colored their interpretation of Joseph Smith's already enigmatic organization. The purpose, therefore, of this discussion of the United Firm—including the text and annotation of the revelation that disbanded it—is to affirm its existence as a business partnership and to better understand Joseph Smith as the manager of an extensive though troubled business enterprise.

A Lengthy and Complex Revelation

The United Firm emerged in 1832 when Joseph Smith and other Church leaders gathered at Independence, Missouri, and founded a branch mercantile business. They joined the new branch with an already established business in Kirtland and named the unified enterprise the United Firm. While functioning privately, the officers of the firm supervised these and other properties in Ohio and Missouri under a strict but tenuous

1. Though several writers have discussed the revelation that ended the United Firm, currently the most insightful treatment of the revelation and of the United Firm itself is Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book, 1985), 43–70; and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith: A Historical and Biographical Commentary of the Doctrine and Covenants* (Provo, Utah: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981), 167–69, 210–12. Others who comment on the United Firm with awareness of its existence are Mark L. Staker, "'Thou Art the Man': Newel K. Whitney in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 42, no. 1 (2003): 107–12; Richard Lyman Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 182, 235; Dean C. Jessee, ed. and comp., *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (1984; reprint, Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, and Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 2002), 34 n. 47, 277; Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1979), 31; Milton V. Backman Jr., *The Heavens Resound* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 71, 144; Mario S. De Pillis, "The Development of Mormon Communitarianism, 1826–1846" (PhD diss., Yale University, 1960), 170–99.

spiritual bond. Then, after the firm had experienced two years of lively financial activity, debt encroached, and Joseph Smith received a revelation on April 23, 1834, to retrench and set the firm in order. This lengthy revelation, Doctrine and Covenants 104, directed the Prophet to terminate the firm as then organized and redistribute its Kirtland business properties and urban and rural real estate to its officers for their own use or management. While naming the properties, the revelation provides readers with a rich inventory of the company's Kirtland holdings. Although the revelation did not include the properties located in Missouri, all of the firm's properties will be considered.

The revelation also separated the growing branch of the United Firm at Kirtland from the branch in Missouri. It affirmed the owners of the Church's new publishing business in Kirtland, which Joseph referred to as the "literary firm," and it assigned business and residential lots to some of its officers. It also assigned to Joseph Smith a large temple lot, which had been selected to accommodate three "houses" of the Lord. It granted authority to another officer to sell city lots in the expanding Latter-day Saint community and planned a treasury for the now separate United Firm at Kirtland. The revelation also expressed disapproval and marked chagrin over unnamed officers of the firm because problems arose from their sometimes discordant leadership, but it ended agreeably while encouraging the leaders in their future pursuits.

The revelation as recorded in our current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants is used here for convenience, but the full text of the annotated revelation (pp. 41–57 herein) is taken from its earliest known manuscript, written April 26, 1834, by Orson Pratt under the direction of Joseph Smith (three days after the Prophet received it).² Pratt copied the revelation from its original transcription (now lost) into a book currently designated as Book C, the third of three manuscript notebooks containing an intermediate copy of the revelations of the Ohio and Missouri period.³ The first of the three notebooks bears on the worn cardboard cover the title "Book of Commandments Law and Covenants," and inside the cover is written faintly, "Orson Hyde Bk A." Hyde was Joseph Smith's principal scribe in

2. Orson Pratt, "Second Book of Orson," 78, Orson Pratt Papers, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City (hereafter cited as Church Archives).

3. After copying the revelation into Book C, Pratt wrote at the end of the revelation, "copied from the original by O. Pratt." Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, C, 43, Revelation Collection, Church Archives.

recording these revelations into the three notebooks.⁴ Four months after Pratt recorded the revelation into Book C, Orson Hyde copied it and other revelations from there into the larger and better-known “Kirtland Revelation Book,” sometimes used as an early source for publication.⁵ At the end of this revelation in the larger record, Hyde wrote, “Recorded by O. Hyde 18 Augt. 1834 upon this Book.”⁶

The Beginning: Three Early Commanding Interests of Joseph Smith

In 1831, following a revelation that directed the Saints to gather to Ohio from New York, Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland about the first of February with Sidney Rigdon and Edward Partridge, Ohioans who had gone to New York to meet him.⁷ Once in Ohio, the Prophet attended to three emerging Church interests: economics, Zion’s location, and the publication of his revelations.

An Economic Plan for Zion. On February 9, just five days after appointing Partridge, a Painesville merchant, to be the Church’s first bishop, Joseph Smith received a revelation containing an economic plan of operation based upon frugality, industry, virtuous living, and certain core management principles of consecration and stewardship, precepts he believed would be necessary in building Zion, the millennial New Jerusalem. This economic plan was part of an extensive revelation known as “the law,” given for the government of the Saints.⁸ The plan directed the faithful who would gather to Zion—soon to be identified as being in western Missouri—to consecrate or grant their property by certificate to Bishop Partridge, the Church agent there over temporal affairs. Then, Bishop Partridge would return to them as stewards their personal property, adding tracts of agricultural land by lease, to provide them stewardships

4. The three notebooks contain thirty-one revelations. Orson Hyde was scribe to Joseph Smith from June 6, 1833, to January 21, 1836. Dean C. Jessee, “The Writing of Joseph Smith’s History,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 444.

5. On its front cover and spine, this record also bears the titles “Book of Revelations” and “Kirtland Revelations,” respectively. Kirtland Revelation Book, Revelation Collection, Church Archives. For a review of the Kirtland Revelation Book and the thirty-five revelations it contains, see Earl E. Olson, “The Chronology of the Ohio Revelations,” *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (1971): 329–49.

6. Kirtland Revelation Book, 107.

7. D&C: 37:3; 38:32; Joseph Smith Jr., *History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2d ed., rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1971), 1:145 (hereafter cited as *History of the Church*).

8. D&C 42:2, 30–42. “The law” also directed Church members in the moral law, the ministry, and other principles.

or inheritances. By this grant and lease transfer system, the gathering Mormon settlers to Missouri, even the poor, were positioned to prosper as farmers, craftsmen, and shopkeepers. By their diligence and faith as wise stewards and faithful laborers, the Saints could then generate a sufficient profit or surplus to help the Church build its Zion community.⁹

At Kirtland, while the law of consecration and stewardship pertained loosely to all the Saints in principle, its implementation was soon applied directly to the future partners of the United Firm.¹⁰ In December 1831, a revelation appointed Newel K. Whitney bishop at Kirtland and directed him to consecrate his properties to the Church. Obediently, he consecrated his two-story, white-frame store, the anchor of his N. K. Whitney and Company, to the service of the Church. After doing so, he continued to operate the store not only for public use but also for use as the Lord's storehouse, which sometimes helped poor Saints, needy missionaries, and later the officers of the United Firm.¹¹ Whitney also consecrated his other properties and managed them as holdings of the United Firm after it was organized the following spring. These included a residential lot on the hill near the site of the future temple and properties near his store at the crossroads in the main village center, located a half mile north of the temple lot and in the valley or flats of the east branch of the Chagrin River. The properties near his store comprised a lot for his residence and another house, a commercial lot he owned with a business partner, and a profitable ashery.¹²

The Location of Zion. Joseph Smith's second interest, a pressing one, was to identify the location for the city of Zion. Before Joseph left New York, the Saints already knew that the site for the sacred gathering place was

9. For published copies of the certificates of transfer, see Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 28–29; William E. Berrett and Alma P. Burton, *Readings in L.D.S. Church History from Original Manuscripts*, 3 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1953–58), 1:113–17.

10. At first, some saw Kirtland only as a temporary gathering place or way station for the Saints en route to Missouri. D&C 29:8; 64:21–22; see Ezra Booth as quoted in Eber D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* (Painesville, Ohio: by the author, 1834), 199.

11. D&C 72:2–12; 78:3; 63:42; see Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 211.

12. D&C 104:39–41; see Staker, “Thou Art the Man,” 84–85, 95; Geauga County Deed Record, 8:426; 15:322; 14:385; 12:627; 8:427, microfilm located in the Family History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City.

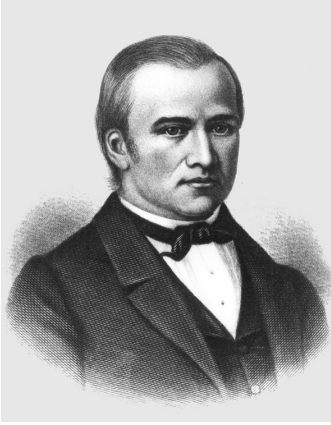


FIG. 2. Newel K. Whitney (1795–1850). In 1832, Whitney at the age of thirty-seven became the chief financial agent of the United Firm at Kirtland, after having been appointed bishop the previous year. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

somewhere in western Missouri on the “borders by the Lamanites.”¹³ Now in Ohio, Joseph Smith was determined to locate the site precisely. In response to a revelation received in June 1831, Joseph Smith, Edward Partridge, Sidney Rigdon, and two dozen other elders left Kirtland for the West. Once in Missouri, the Prophet identified the site for the future holy city as Jackson County, on the western edge of the state, next to the Indian lands, and Independence, the county seat, as the center place.¹⁴ He also met with Oliver Cowdery and other vanguard missionaries, who had arrived several months earlier and briefly taught the Indians on their lands and the settlers in the county. At Independence, a revelation appointed Bishop Partridge to administer the new economic program of consecration and stewardship in Missouri; Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Whitney’s

mercantile partner in Kirtland, to establish a store at Independence; and William W. Phelps to serve there as “printer unto the church” with Oliver Cowdery as his assistant.¹⁵ Phelps, who had converted to the Church only a month before, was suited to the job, having served as editor or publisher of newspapers in New York.¹⁶ On August 2, Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery, and others met eight miles west of Independence and two miles east of the Indian border and dedicated the land for Zion. The next day Rigdon consecrated the future temple lot¹⁷ a half mile west of the new

13. See 3 Nephi 20:22; D&C 28:8–9; Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 213; Journal History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, October 17, 1830, 6, Church Archives (hereafter cited as Journal History).

14. D&C 52:3–32; 57:1–3; “To Oliver Cowdery. To the Elders of the Church of Latter Day Saints,” *Messenger and Advocate* 1, no. 12 (September 1835): 179.

15. D&C 57:6–13. The revelation was dated July 20, 1831; see Kirtland Revelation Book, 89.

16. See Peter Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 2 vols. (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University: 1997), 1:17–18.

17. D&C 58:57. For a description of the temple site by Ezra Booth, an elder present at the dedication, see Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 198–99. For the present

Jackson County courthouse.¹⁸ The brick courthouse was in the center of the ax-hewn and rugged frontier village of Independence; both the town and its citizens reflected “the backwoods style,” said Emily Partridge, Bishop Partridge’s daughter.¹⁹

The First Literary Firm. After his return from Missouri, Joseph Smith’s next notable interest, his publication pursuits, prompted him in September 1831 to move from Kirtland, Geauga County, to neighboring Hiram, Portage County. At Hiram, he worked on his papers while he and his family lived for a year with John and Elsa Johnson, interrupted only by another visit to Missouri. Important to Joseph were editing the “New Translation” of the Bible and preparing his own revelations for publication. In September he sent William W. Phelps to Cincinnati on Phelps’s return to Missouri to purchase a press for use in Independence where Joseph would publish his revelations.

Meanwhile in Hiram, Joseph Smith and leading elders held five conferences, November 1–13, 1831, to prepare his revelations for publication. At their final meeting, they organized a “literary firm,” an antecedent to the United Firm, to manage Church publications and provide an income for its officers. Named at a meeting with a “claim on the church for recompense” for past publishing services were Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, John Whitmer, and Martin Harris.²⁰ The conference of elders then elected these men, whom a revelation ratified, and added the name of Phelps to help manage the literary firm in Zion.²¹ The revelation appointed

locations of the two newly-dedicated sites, see Lamar C. Berrett, ed., *Sacred Places, Missouri* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2004), 19–22, 33–36, 95–96.

18. A revelation named the new courthouse as a reference point. D&C 57:3; see Max H Parkin, “The Courthouse Mentioned in the Revelation on Zion,” *BYU Studies* 14, no. 4 (1974): 451–57.

19. Emily D. P. Young, “Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent* 13 (December 1, 1884): 103.

20. Joseph Smith said, “Br. Oliver has labored with me from the beginning in writing & Br. Martin has labored with me from the beginning, brs. John and Sidney also for a considerable time, & as these sacred writings are now going to the Church for their benefit, that we may have claim on the Church for recompense.” Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 32.

21. D&C 70:1. In organizing the literary firm, the elders “voted that in consequence of the diligence of our brethren, Joseph Smith jr. Oliver Cowdery John Whitmer & Sidney Rigdon in bringing to light by grace of God these sacred things, be appointed to manage them according to the Laws of the Church & the Commandments of the Lord.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32; D&C 57:11–13, 69:1–3.

the men “stewards over the revelations” and guardians over both their publication and sales; hence, they were to be the beneficiaries of the revenue because “this is their business in the church,” it declared.²² Until the literary firm could generate enough income of its own, however, the officers were allowed to draw from the Lord’s storehouses for their needs; once acquired, surplus earnings from the sales of publications were to be turned over to the storehouse for the Church’s use.²³ John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery left Ohio on November 20 with manuscript copies of the revelations and arrived in Independence on January 5, 1832, to assist Phelps in operating the new printing house.²⁴ Quickly, with Phelps’s help, they began preparing a printer’s copy of the revelations from which they set type for the prospective “Book of Commandments.” The following June, their new publishing firm, W. W. Phelps and Co., began printing the Church paper *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which contained imprints of the revelations awaiting fuller publication in the Book of Commandments.²⁵

Establishing the United Firm

Meanwhile in Ohio, the Prophet learned that he needed a system to better manage the Church’s growing commercial and financial interests. “The time has come,” stated a revelation (D&C 78) in March 1832, for Newel K. Whitney, Joseph Smith, and Sidney Rigdon to “sit in council” with the Saints in Missouri.²⁶ A crucial but unpublished part of the revelation informed the Prophet as to their specific purpose for going to Missouri. There “must needs be . . . an *organization of the literary and mercantile* establishments of my church both in this place and in the land of Zion,” it declared.²⁷ This new unified enterprise should be “for a permanent

22. D&C 70:3–7.

23. D&C 42:34; 70:7; 72:20.

24. Bruce N. Westergren, ed., *From Historian to Dissident: The Book of John Whitmer* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 102; D&C 69; for a consideration of the texts they delivered, see Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Mo.: Herald Publishing House, 1969), 198.

25. *The Evening and the Morning Star*, June 1832, 1, 8; *History of the Church*, 1:217, 273. Besides these printed works, the Prophet contemplated soon the publication of others, such as his “New Translation” of the Bible, the Church hymnal, children’s textbooks and a Church almanac. See Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 46; *Evening and Morning Star*, June 1832, 6; Kirtland Revelation Book, 19, 105; Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration*, 44.

26. D&C 78:9.

27. Kirtland Revelation Book, 16. This part of the revelation was never placed in the Doctrine and Covenants. See the 1835 edition of Doctrine and Covenants,

and everlasting *establishment and firm* unto my Church.”²⁸ The revelation instructed Joseph Smith and others, including the leaders in Zion, to be “*joined together in this firm*” as partners by an “everlasting covenant” and thereby be equal in both heavenly and earthly things.²⁹ Thus they were directed to operate the Church’s mercantile and literary interests as a united enterprise to be governed by a single board of managers.

Joseph Smith, Newel K. Whitney, and the Prophet’s two newly appointed counselors in the presidency of the high priesthood, Sidney Rigdon and Jesse Gause, left Kirtland on April 1, 1832, for Missouri to organize the new firm.³⁰ On April 26, two days after they arrived, the visiting Church officers met with the leaders in Independence and discussed the instructions of the commandment (revelation) that had sent them west.³¹ Later that day in Independence, the Prophet received another revelation designated as a “new commandment” (D&C 82) that gave additional instructions and named the leaders who would compose the firm.³² It then announced that these officers would also have authority over “all things” pertaining to both bishoprics. And it reminded them that in serving the new firm they were to be “bound together by a bond and covenant.”³³ The following day, April 27, compliant to the March commandment to organize the mercantile establishment in Missouri, they established Gilbert, Whitney and Company, a business that would manage the store in Independence to serve the public and the Saints as the bishop’s storehouse in Zion. At the meeting, the leaders joined this new company with the N. K. Whitney and Company of Kirtland and named the newly integrated mercantile establishment the United Firm.³⁴ This was a defining step toward the Church more widely managing its financial and commercial interests for the next two years—the life of the firm. For the United Firm had a

D&C 75:1 (now D&C 78:3–4); italics added. Section and verse numbers in the 1835 edition differ from section and verse numbers in more recent editions.

28. The word “firm” used here and elsewhere in the manuscript of this revelation was changed to read “order” when published in 1835 in the Doctrine and Covenants (then D&C 75:1). Kirtland Revelation Book, 16; D&C 78:3–4; italics added.

29. D&C 78:6–11; Kirtland Revelation Book, 16; italics added.

30. Joseph Smith said, “March 8th 1832 [I] Chose this day and ordained brother Jesse Gause and Broth Sidney to be my counsellors of the ministry of the presidency of the high Priesthood.” Kirtland Revelation Book, 10–11.

31. D&C 78:11; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 43–44.

32. D&C 82:8, 11.

33. D&C 78:3, 11; 82:11–12, 15; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45, 48.

34. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47–48; *History of the Church*, 1:270. A. S. Gilbert, however, was already operating a Church store from his house. See n. 79 herein.

broader mission than just uniting the two stores and connecting the publishing and mercantile firms.³⁵ On April 30, the officers of the United Firm met and shaped a guiding policy allowing the firm to expand when “special business” was introduced to it.³⁶ Nine of the firm’s ten members attended this meeting. The ten officers of the firm were Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Newel K. Whitney, Jesse Gause, and Martin Harris³⁷ of Kirtland, and Oliver Cowdery, William W. Phelps, Edward Partridge, John Whitmer, and Algernon Sidney Gilbert of Independence.³⁸ Phelps and Gilbert drafted a bond to bind the members of the partnership, and Whitney and Gilbert were appointed as financial agents for their respective branches.³⁹ Jesse Gause soon left the Church, and Frederick G. Williams⁴⁰ and John Johnson⁴¹ joined the firm at Kirtland the following year.

35. The organization’s name, United Firm, fittingly applied not only to the union of the two stores, but also to the union of the mercantile and the publishing establishments and to the united endeavor of its leaders.

36. On April 30, 1832, the firm’s minutes state: “Resolved that whenever any special business occur it shall be the duty of the United Firm by their branches at Jackson County Missouri & Geauga County Ohio to regulate the same by special agency.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 47–48.

37. Martin Harris was not in Missouri to attend these meetings and was not named as a member of the firm in their minutes, but his name later appeared (by the use of a code name) with the others in the “new commandment” revelation when it was published in 1835 as Doctrine and Covenants 86:4 (now D&C 82:11). By contrast, Jesse Gause’s name was excluded from the published copy of the revelation. The Prophet noted that Jesse Gause was excommunicated on December 3, 1832. Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 2:4; D. Michael Quinn, “Jesse Gause: Joseph Smith’s Little-Known Counselor,” *BYU Studies* 23, no. 4 (1983): 487; Robert J. Woodford, “Jesse Gause, Counselor to the Prophet,” *BYU Studies* 15, no. 3 (1975): 362–64.

38. William E. McLellin said that there were nine members of the United Firm; he possibly took his figure from the “new commandment” revelation that excluded Jesse Gause when printed, D&C 82:11. McLellin, *Saints’ Herald* (July 15, 1872): 436.

39. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45, 47; D&C 82:15. For reference to their operating legally, see Kirtland Letter Book, 45, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives; *History of the Church*, 1:363.

40. Williams was called to replace Jesse Gause in the Church Presidency in 1833, not in 1832 as suggested by the current date for D&C 81:1; see Kirtland Revelation Book, 17, where Jesse’s name was erased and the name “Frederick G. Williams” was added in its place. Williams was appointed to the United Firm on March 15, 1833, a week after he was made a member of the Church Presidency. Kirtland Council Minutes, 11; D&C 90:6; 92:1.

41. D&C 96:8; Kirtland Letter Book, 45; *History of the Church*, 1:363. Johnson is at least the twelfth and possibly the last to be appointed as an officer of the United Firm.

Possessing managerial, financial, or publishing skills, members of the United Firm consecrated their time, money, property, and energy and pledged their cooperation to advance the business of their new joint stewardship. While income from the firm's various enterprises was stated to be available for the temporal needs of the officers,⁴² each member was to manage his own stewardship or responsibility within the firm for the benefit of the Church, requiring at times the need to help one another. For example, in June 1833, the Presidency wrote to Bishop Partridge at Independence that inasmuch as "all members of the United Firm are considered one," currently the stewardship of the "literary firm . . . is of the greatest importance" and should be supported by the profits generated by the store in Zion.⁴³ At that time, the leaders were concerned about the expenses associated with printing the Book of Commandments, which by then was well advanced and costly.⁴⁴ Thus, members of the firm believed that by seeking the interest of one another and effecting the success of their united cause, but without ever holding "any property in common," according to Whitney, they could achieve the firm's ultimate fiscal goal of enabling the Church to stand financially "independent above all other creatures."⁴⁵

The United Firm as a company did not own the properties it managed, nor indeed did its officers own them collectively. The deed titles to its businesses remained in the names of individual Latter-day Saint landowners or business proprietors. Various officers of the United Firm owned and managed the following properties: N. K. Whitney and Company; Gilbert, Whitney and Company; W. W. Phelps and Company (entities previously identified); F. G. Williams and Company; Whitney's Kirtland ashery; the firm's real estate—including a commercial lot owned jointly by Whitney and Gilbert; the farm of Frederick G. Williams; the former Peter French

42. D&C 82:17.

43. Kirtland Letter Book, 48; *History of the Church*, 1:365–66.

44. Besides Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer, the married officers of the literary firm at Independence, the press provided labor for four single workers; at least one, William Hobert, a "typographer," had only recently been hired. While *The Evening and the Morning Star*, a monthly publication, and the Church's new *The Upper Advertiser*, a weekly paper, brought in some revenue, the Book of Commandments was labor and material intensive without yet generating any income. *Evening and Morning Star* 2 (December 1833): 2, 5; *History of the Church*, 1:412. They bought paper to print the Book of Commandments on credit. Kirtland Revelation Book, 19.

45. N. K. Whitney to S. F. Whitney, October 2, [1842?], Whitney Collection, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah (hereafter cited as Perry Special Collections); D&C 78:13–14; 82:17–19.

farm at Kirtland; and Bishop Partridge's stewardship lands in Missouri—and other properties. The revelations admonished the partners to be wise in their stewardships and manage them righteously under the bond of the sacred covenant they had made; otherwise they placed themselves in jeopardy, and, in doing so, they understood that judgment might befall them.⁴⁶

The Frederick G. Williams Farm

Shortly after his arrival in Kirtland in February 1831, Joseph Smith settled his parents on a farm owned by Frederick G. Williams. Williams, one of the earliest Kirtland converts, owned a 144-acre farm that he made available to help the newly arriving Saints.⁴⁷ The farm was located on high ground a half mile south of the Whitney store (see fig. 5). An unpublished revelation received in May 1831 gave the Prophet's parents, Joseph Sr. and Lucy Mack Smith, and others access to the farm for their support. The revelation states, "Let mine aged servant Joseph govern the things of the farm . . . inasmuch as he standeth in need."⁴⁸ Father Smith quickly began to manage the farm for his livelihood. Concerning the Smiths, Philo Dibble, a resident of nearby Chardon, wrote, "I held myself in readiness to assist the Smith family with my means or my personal services as they might require, as they were financially poor. They were living on a farm owned by F. G. Williams, in Kirtland."⁴⁹ Lucy spoke of the economy of the farm: "My family were all established with this arrangement, that we were to cultivate the farm, and, from the fruits of our labour, we were to receive our support." Consecration and stewardship seemed to apply to the efforts of the Smiths. At harvest time, anything "over and above" their needs became available "for the comfort of strangers," Lucy said.⁵⁰ When he could free himself from his scribal chores for the Prophet and other duties, Williams

46. D&C 78:12; 82:4, 11; 104:4–10. "God will bring transgression into judgment," wrote the Presidency on June 1833 to officers of the firm. Kirtland Letter Book, 48–49; *History of the Church*, 1:366.

47. A revelation stated that Frederick G. Williams "willeth that the brethren reap the good" of his farm. Kirtland Revelation Book, 92.

48. Kirtland Revelation Book, 92.

49. Philo Dibble, "Philo Dibble's Narrative," *Early Scenes in Church History* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor, 1882), 78. Lucy had the faulty impression that her son or the Church owned the farm. She wrote, "We remained two weeks at Mr. [Isaac] Morley's, then removed our family to a farm which had been purchased by Joseph for the Church." Lavina Fielding Anderson, ed., *Lucy's Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith's Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 540.

50. Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 540.



FIG. 3. Frederick G. Williams (1787–1842). In January 1833, Dr. Frederick G. Williams, age forty-five, consecrated his farm to the Church and that same year became a member of the Church Presidency and a partner in the United Firm. Officers of the firm soon began to subdivide his farm into city lots as part of their plan for a city of the Saints at Kirtland. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

farm would play a major role, as Joseph Smith and other officers of the United Firm began to lay the foundation for an expanded Latter-day Saint Kirtland.

sometimes worked with the Smiths on the farm.⁵¹ By the end of 1835, the increased burden of the farm upon the aging Smith couple forced them to move to a less demanding place.⁵²

On January 5, 1833, a different use of the Williams farm than farming would come to light, however, when a revelation directed Frederick G. Williams to give up his farm. “Let thy farm be consecrated for bringing forth the revelations,” it stated.⁵³ Joseph Smith apparently hoped that the cost of publishing the scriptures in Missouri could be covered by the sale of lots from the Williams farm, which he integrated into the United Firm. Furthermore, five months later, on June 5, 1833, Church leaders broke ground for the construction of the Kirtland Temple on a lot on the southeast edge of the adjacent Peter French farm, which the United Firm had just acquired. This was an early step in the much larger vision of Kirtland municipal planning, in which both the Williams farm and the French

51. Ezra G. Williams, son of Frederick G. Williams, recalled that Joseph Smith Sr. “worked the Farm and Dr Williams rode the Horse to plough corn and potatoes and helped Father Smith in Haying times.” Henrietta Elizabeth Crombie Williams, Journal, May 1, 1899, “Account Book,” 245, Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives. Henrietta Williams was married to Ezra G. Williams.

52. By December that year, the Prophet received his parents into an upper room of his house near the temple and two doors south of the Kirtland cemetery “where we lived very comfortably for a season,” said Lucy. Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 587; Jesse, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:123.

53. “Revelation for Farm,” unpublished revelation, January 5, 1833, Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives.

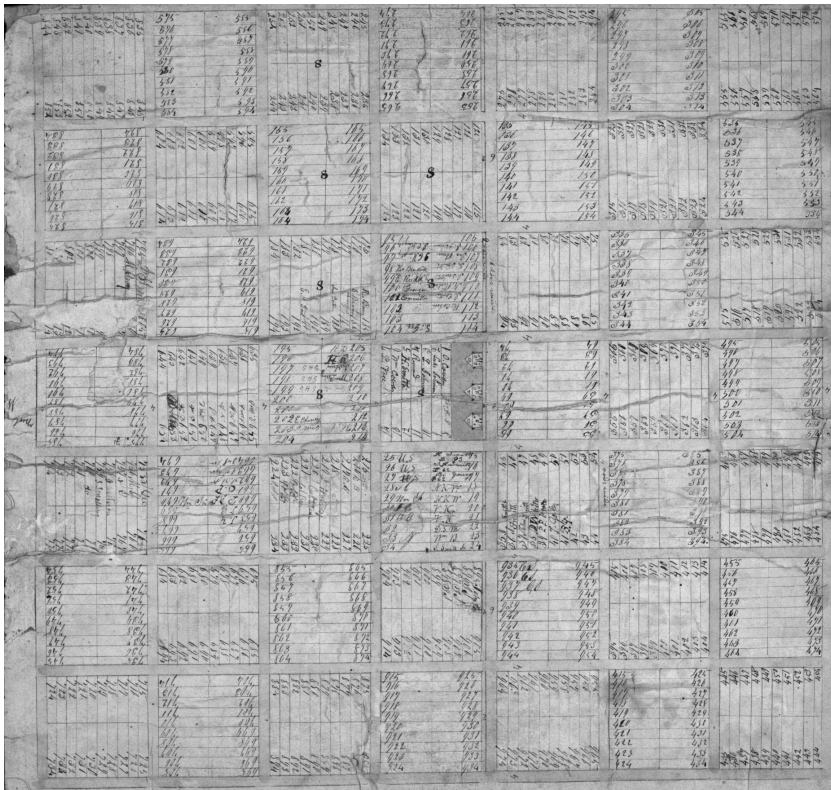


FIG. 4. Plat map for the Latter-day Saint City of Kirtland, 1833. After acquiring the Peter French and Frederick G. Williams farms, Joseph Smith and other leaders of the United Firm began to lay the “foundation of the city of the stake of Zion” (D&C 94:1). A mile-square city was planned with the large temple lot on the east end of the center block, shown here with three lightly sketched buildings. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc. To view this map in greater detail, see the online version of this article.

On August 2, 1833, a revelation instructed the Church at Kirtland to commence building the “city of the stake of Zion” with the temple to be in the city’s center.⁵⁴ The Williams farm would provide most of the southwest quarter of the proposed city and the French farm would provide most of the northwest quarter. Joseph Smith and other leaders of the firm quickly platted the area into a one-mile-square community with a Kirtland plat map showing the temple lot on the city’s center block (fig.4). The plat map

54. D&C 94:1. The date listed for this revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants is incorrect. The correct date is August 2, 1833; see Kirtland Revelation Book, 64; Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 195–96; D&C 88:119.

showed the city divided into forty-nine ten-acre blocks and the blocks subdivided into twenty half-acre building lots. The temple lot on the southeast edge of the French farm was combined with a similar, adjacent temple lot on the northeast edge of the Williams farm; together they formed the eastern third of the city's new center block (see fig. 5). This larger temple lot would provide space for three major Church buildings, houses, or temples, as had been directed by the August revelation (D&C 94). The first temple was to be used for worship and for schooling, and on the Williams portion of the temple lot, immediately south and parallel to the temple under construction, were to be two additional large edifices—an office building for the Presidency and next to it a substantial Church printing house.⁵⁵ Later, the April 1834 revelation (D&C 104), which distributed the properties of the United Firm, assigned these two small contiguous lots to Joseph Smith to manage as a single larger temple lot while the Saints built the city around it.⁵⁶ Two weeks after Joseph received the April revelation, Frederick G. Williams transferred title of his farm to Joseph Smith in two separate deeds, one for the temple lot on his farm and the other for the rest of his farm, which then was just over 142 acres.⁵⁷

The Peter French Farm

Meanwhile, to prepare for population growth and economic development at Kirtland, the Church had already purchased the Peter French farm. Joseph Coe, a short-term Church land agent but not a member of the United Firm, had paid Peter French \$2,000 down on his 103-acre farm located on the flats of the Chagrin River and southward up the hill to the Williams farm (see fig. 5). The farm also included French's dwelling house and inn. Coe purchased the farm in April 1833 for total price of \$5,000 with a mortgage contract to pay the remaining balance of \$3,000 in two equal payments in April 1834 and 1835. But on June 4, a revelation directed Bishop Whitney to "take charge" of the farm, and within a few days N. K. Whitney and Company, serving as a holding agent for the United Firm,

55. The three buildings were to be of the same appearance and dimensions, 55' x 65'. D&C 88:78–79, 118–19; 94:3–12; Plat Map of Kirtland, 1833, Church Archives.

56. D&C 104:43; see ns. 199 and 200 herein.

57. The date for the transfer as recorded on both deeds was May 5, 1834, but the agreement for the transfer may have been much earlier. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:477–80.

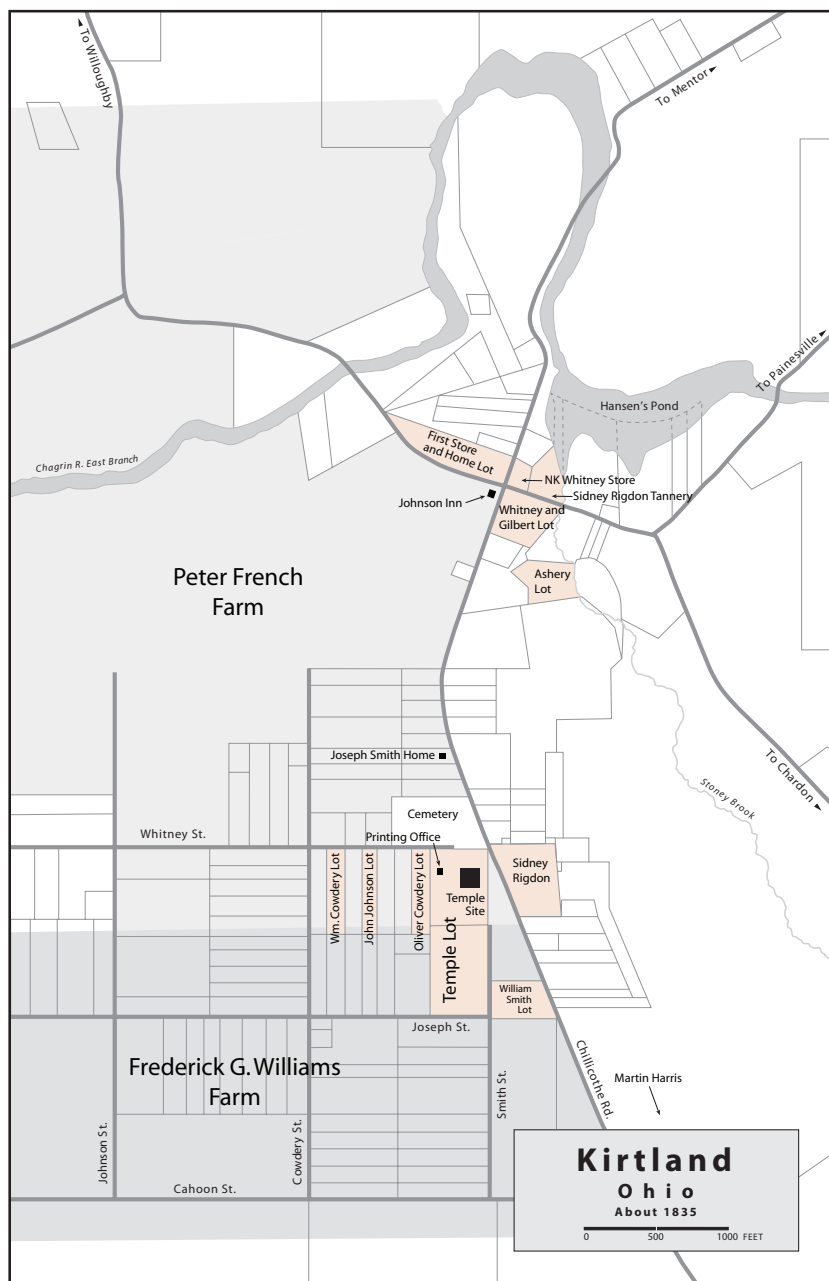


FIG. 5. Kirtland, 1835. The map shows the properties at Kirtland managed by the United Firm and assigned to the firm's officers at the time the firm was discontinued. The Church planned to construct three "houses" or temples on the large temple lot on the city's center block.

acquired the farm (and its debt) from Coe and managed it.⁵⁸ Together, the Williams and French farms composed most of the west half of the proposed new Latter-day Saint city of Kirtland. Lots were to be surveyed and sold to the Saints “to benefit *the firm* for the purpose of bringing forth” the scriptures being published in Missouri.⁵⁹ In about 1813, Peter French had constructed a two-and-a-half-story brick house or inn on the river flats of his farm. The inn was located at the village’s principal intersection on the township’s main road, across from the future Whitney store. The township’s primary north-south route, Chillicothe Road, now bordered the two Church farms lying west of it and, like other existing land features, was not represented on the new plat map. Four years later, Church leaders filed an expanded community plat with the county, petitioning for a two-mile square city, still showing the large temple lot in the center.⁶⁰

In March and June 1833, Frederick G. Williams and John Johnson, respectively, were added as officers in the United Firm.⁶¹ Williams entered the firm that spring as he replaced Jesse Gause in the Church Presidency and possibly as a reward for the consecration of his farm.⁶² Johnson entered possibly because of his many acts of service to Joseph Smith at Hiram and because of the hope that the firm would receive funds from the sale of his farm in Portage County, Ohio.⁶³ As Johnson moved to Kirtland, he received the former French Inn as his stewardship and residence and was authorized with Bishop Whitney to sell town lots surveyed from the

58. D&C 96:2. The date on the deed of transfer for the French Farm from French to Coe was April 10, 1833, and from Coe to N. K. Whitney and Company was June 17, 1833. Geauga County Deed Record, 17:38–39; 360–61; Kirtland Council Minutes, 18.

59. D&C 96:3–4. Quoted from the original, Kirtland Revelation Book, 61; italics added. Whitney and Johnson were appointed as agents of the firm to sell lots from the farm. “List of Town Lots Sold b[y] Johnson and Whitney,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

60. “A Map of Kirtland City,” 1837, Geauga County Deed Record, 24:99; separate copy in Church Archives.

61. D&C 92:1; 96:6–8; Kirtland Council Minutes, 11, 13; Kirtland Letter Book, 33, 45; *History of the Church*, 1:340, 363.

62. Kirtland Council Minutes, 11; see n. 40 herein.

63. Portage County Deed Book, 18:393–94. Funds from the sale of Johnson’s farm may not have been available until May 10, 1834.

farm.⁶⁴ In 1836, N. K. Whitney and Company, which still held title to the French farm, transferred ownership to Johnson.⁶⁵

The Ashery and Other Properties

Members of the United Firm operated other businesses in Kirtland as named in the April 1834 revelation that dissolved the firm (see fig. 5). Perhaps the most profitable of these was an ashery owned by Bishop Whitney as part of his N. K. Whitney and Company. Years before, on September 5, 1822, Whitney, as a newlywed, had bought a lot from Peter French for an ashery a few rods south of his future Whitney store. He started his ashery business by January 1824, which proved successful, and then expanded it with a smaller lot to the south. During that period, asheries often provided a profitable cash product for mercantile institutions, and a number of stores in northeastern Ohio did business with asheries or owned them outright as did Whitney.⁶⁶ Whitney's Kirtland ashery produced potash and the more refined pearlash, both of which had robust markets in New York and England as ingredients in the production of soap, glass, gunpowder, and other products. After he consecrated his ashery, Whitney continued to operate it profitably for the United Firm.⁶⁷

Other industries used or operated at Kirtland by Latter-day Saints included a brickyard, a stone quarry, a sawmill, and a tannery, some of which were supervised by the United Firm. Frederick G. Williams superintended a brickyard a half mile northwest of the Whitney store.⁶⁸ Joseph Coe had purchased the brickyard as part of the French farm, intending to use brick from it to help build the community. At first, even the builders of the temple considered using brick for its walls but later changed the project to stone.⁶⁹ The brickyard, however, was not singled out as a separate business of the United Firm sufficient enough to have it listed in the April revelation. To build the temple, the Church used stone from a quarry two miles

64. D&C 96:2–3, 6–8; 104:34–36; “List of Town Lots,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

65. Geauga County Deed Record, 22:497. N. K. Whitney and Company continued to hold title to the farm, including the inn, and paid taxes on it until 1836. Geauga County Tax Duplicates, Vol. 507:27; 508:19; 509:25.

66. See Benjamin C. Pykles, “An Introduction to the Kirtland Flats Ashery,” *BYU Studies* 41, no. 1 (2002): 164–66; Staker, ““Thou Art the Man,”” 85–88; see n. 196 herein.

67. D&C 104:39; see Pykles, “Kirtland Flats Ashery,” 160–79.

68. Kirtland Council Minutes, 19.

69. Benjamin F. Johnson, *My Life's Review* (Mesa, Ariz.: 21st Century Printing, 1992), 16.

south of the temple lot and also built a water-powered sawmill near the ashery to assist in its construction, but, again, the April revelation did not include these enterprises. The revelation, however, did name a commercial lot owned jointly by Whitney and Gilbert, across the street from the Whitney store, and a tannery.⁷⁰ Arnold Mason, a non-Mormon, had purchased an acre lot from French in 1832, immediately east of the Whitney store, and built a tannery on it. On April 2, 1833, a council of high priests authorized Ezra Thayer to purchase the tannery from Mason for the Church,⁷¹ but no purchase was made until May 3, 1834, ten days after the April revelation that distributed the firm's properties. The revelation awarded the tannery to Sidney Rigdon, who afterwards managed it as a successful personal stewardship and business.⁷²

The United Firm Properties in Missouri

With the expected gathering of the Saints to Jackson County, Joseph Smith, during his first visit to Missouri in July 1831, quickly stressed the need to purchase land. Buy "every tract lying westward" to the Indian border and southward "every tract bordering by the prairies," pronounced a revelation in Independence that July.⁷³ The Prophet Joseph and others immediately scouted much of the area in Kaw township from the Blue River west of town to the Indian line, ten miles west of the Jackson County courthouse.⁷⁴ That same month, Bishop Edward Partridge purchased 356 acres in four tracts in Kaw township. Two tracts were on the Indian border near the government's Shawnee-Delaware Indian Agency, and two tracts were just east of them, all of which were on the edge of the prairie about five miles south of the Missouri River and twelve miles southwest of

70. D&C 104:20, 39.

71. Kirtland Council Minutes, 19; Geauga County Deed Record, 18:487; see Mark L. Staker, "History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery," Appendix A, 2–3, unpublished typescript, Museum of Church History and Art.

72. D&C 104:20; Geauga County Deed Record, 18:487; see n. 177 herein; *Times and Seasons* 4 (May 15, 1843): 193.

73. D&C 57:4–5.

74. The distance from Independence directly to the Indian lands was ten miles, twelve miles by way of the old road, known as the Westport Road, a link in the Santa Fe Trail. Joseph Knight, who arrived on July 25, 1831, said, "Joseph [Smith] at this time Looked out the Country and found the place for the City and Temple and set a mark." Dean Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies* 17, no. 1 (1976): 39.

Independence.⁷⁵ Then, on August 8, a day before Joseph Smith left Independence for Ohio, Partridge bought two adjacent town lots, one for Phelps's printing house, a half block south of the courthouse.⁷⁶ That fall and during the next two years, Partridge continued buying land. Most of it was in the heavily forested area of Kaw township toward the Missouri River and some along the north-flowing Blue River where Kaw and Blue townships met, including the crossing where Orrin Rockwell later operated a ferry. As funds became available, Bishop Partridge acquired a total of 2,136 acres in Jackson County, most of which he distributed to the Latter-day Saints as stewardships of about twenty acres each.⁷⁷ The bishop held title to all the land he purchased, including the sixty-three acres of the temple lot a half mile west of the courthouse, which he acquired on December 19, 1831, for \$130.⁷⁸

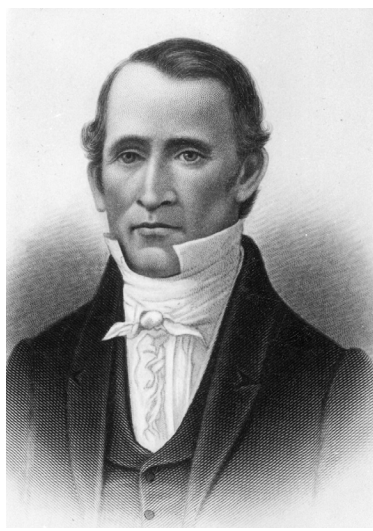


FIG. 6. Edward Partridge (1793–1840). Bishop Edward Partridge, a merchant of Painesville, Ohio, was appointed first bishop of the Church in 1831. The following year, at age thirty-eight, he became a member of the United Firm in Jackson County, Missouri. In this capacity, he bought land to administer consecration and stewardship in Zion. Courtesy Scott H. Partridge.

75. The four tracts were purchased on July 26, 1831. U.S. Land Patents, Department of the Interior, Washington, D.C.; copies are in the author's possession.

76. Lots 75 and 76, the two lots Partridge purchased, sold in 1827 in Independence's original lot sales for \$10 each. Partridge acquired Lot 76 "with appurtenances" for \$50 for the printing house and Lot 75 for \$10. Jackson County Deed Record, A 111, 114; Fifth Judicial Circuit Court, February Term, 1835, 27, 47–49. "Book of Original Sales, Independence, Mo.," Jackson County Courthouse, Independence, Missouri.

77. Clark V. Johnson, ed., *Mormon Redress Petitions* (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1992), 513; Berrett, *Sacred Places: Missouri*, 11, 18, 84; Benton Pixley, "The Mormonites," *Independent (Boston) Messenger*, November 29, 1832, np.

78. The size of the temple lot, purchased by Bishop Partridge from Jones Flournoy, was 63 43/160 acres. Jackson County Deed Record, B 1–2. At Winter Quarters, Nebraska, in 1848, Brigham Young gave Edward Partridge's widow, Lydia, permission to sell the temple lot to help get her family "over the mountains"

Other officers of the United Firm bought stewardship land in Jackson County. Shortly before the firm was organized, Sidney Gilbert bought a town lot on Lynn Street, a block southeast of the courthouse, with a log building on it that he used for his own residence and temporarily as the Church store.⁷⁹ Then in November 1832, six months after the leaders organized the United Firm, the recently established Gilbert, Whitney and Company at Independence purchased a lot facing the courthouse on the northwest corner of the intersection of Lexington and Liberty streets as a permanent site for their mercantile firm—the Gilbert and Whitney store—with Gilbert continuing as storekeeper.⁸⁰ Later, Gilbert, Whitney and Company bought four adjacent lots on Liberty Street a block south of the courthouse.⁸¹ Meanwhile, Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer, as managers of W. W. Phelps and Company, together bought four lots on Liberty Street across from the future Gilbert and Whitney lots.⁸² In April 1833, Gilbert, Whitney and Company bought a tract of 154 acres on the Missouri River

to the Salt Lake Valley. Lydia sold it on May 5, 1848, for \$300. Jackson County Deed Record, N 203–4; Journal History, April 26, 1848.

79. D&C 57:8. On February 20, 1832, Sidney Gilbert, in the name of “Gilbert and Whitney,” purchased the vacated Jackson County pioneer log courthouse and its site on Lynn Street, the west 1.5 acres of Lot 59, for \$371. Jackson County Court Record, 1:22, 30, 136; Jackson County Deed Record, B 32–33. Gilbert renovated the log building into a residence and a store by adding a brick side room for the store. See Mary Lightner, “Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner,” *Utah Genealogical and Historical Magazine* 17 (1926): 195; Ronald E. Romig, *Early Independence, Missouri: “Mormon” History Tour Guide* (Blue Springs, Mo.: Missouri Mormon Frontier Foundation, 1994), 36. The log courthouse was built in 1828 under the supervision of Lilburn W. Boggs, superintendent of Jackson County public buildings. Jackson County Court Record, 1:22, 30. In 1916, in a dilapidated condition, the courthouse, as a frontier icon, was moved to Kansas Street and restored. Celebrated today as the oldest courthouse west of the Mississippi River and one in which county judge (and later) President Harry S. Truman briefly held court, the building should also be remembered as the oldest surviving house, and bishop’s storehouse, owned and occupied by Latter-day Saints in Missouri.

80. Gilbert, Whitney and Company purchased Lot 51 for \$700 with “appurtenancey and Buildings thereunto” on November 19, 1832. Jackson County Deed Record, C 13. This store is not to be confused with the earlier store located in Sidney Gilbert’s residence. See n. 79 above. Gilbert had a tendency to deny poor Saints credit in his store, for which he was chastised. Kirtland Letter Book, 34–35; *History of the Church*, 1:341.

81. Lots 104, 105, 108, and 109 of about .28 acres each were bought from the county on August 14, 1833, for a total of \$50. Jackson County Deed Record, C 14.

82. Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitmer purchased lots 95, 98, 99, and 102, the latter with “appurtenances,” from Azariah Holcomb on December 29, 1832, for \$160. Jackson County Deed Record, B 135, F 54.

five miles northeast of Independence. This riverfront land was immediately west of the Blue Mills landing, Independence's principal freight landing, and just two miles north of the main road from neighboring Lexington, Lafayette County, to Independence.⁸³ Although Church leaders never left a record as to their intended use of this riverfront property, they probably considered it valuable in developing a landing for their use in the mercantile business and for Mormon immigration to the county. Since Independence was the chief departure point for the far West, the Church leaders probably desired that their people avoid contact with the brutish if not sometimes rough behavior of Rocky Mountain fur trappers, western adventurers, and Santa Fe Trail freighters who used the public landings.⁸⁴ Through these land purchases by officers of the United Firm and through immigration, the Saints were vigorously laying the foundation of Zion.

Just as Joseph Smith and other members of the United Firm at Kirtland were making plans to develop that community, the same leaders were also developing plans for a similar city of the Saints at Independence. On June 25, 1833, Joseph Smith mailed a package to the firm's leaders at Independence, containing a plan for the New Jerusalem, and reminded them that "all members of the United Firm" were considered equal in their ventures. The package contained a plat map for a proposed mile-square city with streets and lots laid at right angles like those planned for Kirtland. The plat map with the temple lot in the center had the numbers one to twenty-four to mark the location for temples or houses of the Lord to be built on two fifteen-acre center blocks.⁸⁵ It also contained drawings for the buildings, architecturally similar to the Kirtland Temple, and a letter of instructions from the Presidency.

83. Gilbert and Whitney purchased the land for \$840 and issued a bond to pay \$350 in April 1834 and in 1835, but they transferred the title in May 1833, while still under the bond, back to Solomon Flourney, the original owner. Jackson County Deed Record, B 196, 200–201, 209–10. Union Historical Company, *The History of Jackson County, Missouri*, (Kansas City, Mo.: Birdsall, Williams and Co., 1881), 388, 391; Gregory M. Franzwa, *Maps of the Santa Fe Trail* (St. Louis, Mo.: Patrice Press, 1989), 23.

84. Independence had two landings; the second was three miles north of town, but a long northern loop on the Missouri River at the time made it less inviting.

85. Zion Plat Map, June 1833, Church Archives. In the June letter, the Prophet wrote, "The whole plot is supposed to contain from 15 to 20 thousand people[,] you will therefore see that it will require 24 buildings to supply them with houses of worship, schools." Kirtland Letter Book, 39; *History of the Church*, 1:358. At first they considered building a single temple in Zion. D&C 57:3; 84:4.

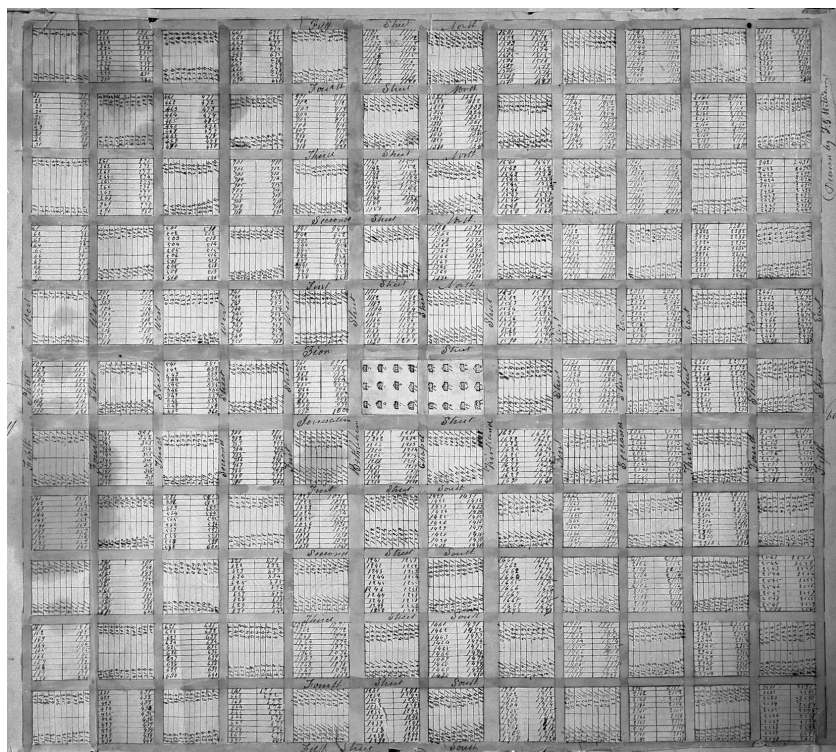


FIG. 7. Plat Map of Zion, August 1833. Similar to the plat for Kirtland, but for a larger city, the map, drawn by Frederick G. Williams, shows twenty-four line-drawn structures on the center ten-acre lots. Instructions accompanying the map directed the leaders of the United Firm at Independence, Missouri, to construct first the three buildings of the twenty-four that were to serve the same purposes as those planned for Kirtland. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

On August 6, Joseph Smith and other leaders of the firm at Kirtland sent another package—one containing a revised city plat for Zion, for a larger city with new temple plans, and another letter of instruction. The revised city plat now had two ten-acre blocks in the center, with sketches of twenty-four line-drawn temples or “houses” to be built on the two center blocks, and, like the first plat, it divided each of the rest of the blocks into twenty half-acre lots but added five more tiers of blocks (fig. 7). The package also contained a pattern for larger buildings. Oliver Cowdery, who had recently returned to Kirtland, helped to prepare the August package. He wrote:

Those patterns [of the temple] previously sent you [June 25, 1833], per mail, by our brethren are incorrect in some respects; being drawn in grate

haste. They have therefore drawn these, which are correct. The form of the city was also incorrect being drawn in haste. We send you another.⁸⁶

The new city plat named some of the city streets with titles such as “Jerusalem Street” and “Bethlehem Street.” The new, modified temple designs, which were drawn for the larger buildings, depicted two tiers of nine windows on each side compared to five windows shown on the earlier design.⁸⁷

Both packages contained instructions for building the first three of the twenty-four temples planned for Zion. Moreover, the Kirtland plan for the three “houses of the Lord” and the sequence of building them was also to be the pattern for Independence.⁸⁸ Like the Kirtland Saints, Church members in Independence had an urgent need for a meetinghouse and school.⁸⁹ Therefore, the first building was to be “for all purposes of religion and instruction,” said the Presidency in their June letter, and it was to be “built immediately.”⁹⁰ The Missouri leaders learned that the Lord approved of the building plan for Independence from a revelation dated August 2, 1833, that accompanied the second package. The first temple was to be “a place of thanksgiving” or worship for the Saints and for “a school in Zion,” reported the Lord in that revelation; it was to be like the “pattern which I have given you.”⁹¹ Then after the first structure was built, the Presidency

86. Oliver Cowdery, “An explanation of the following pattern,” on back of an architectural drawing. Zion Temple plans, August 1833, Church Archives.

87. The size of the temples in Zion were here enlarged from 87' x 61' to 97' x 61'. Zion Temple plans, August 1833. See also Ronald E. Romig and John H. Siebert, “Jackson County, 1831–1833: A Look at the Development of Zion,” *Restoration Studies* 3 (1986): 286–304.

88. D&C 88:118–119; 94:2–12; see n. 55 herein. Cook, *Revelations of Joseph Smith*, 195–96.

89. D&C 97:3–4, 11. Parley P. Pratt said that his “school of Elders” met in the “open air, under some tall trees, in a retired place in the wilderness.” Parley P. Pratt, *Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938), 93–94. Emily Dow Partridge wrote, “About the first thing the Saints did after providing shelter for their families, was to start a school for their children. The first school I remember attending was in a log cabin in Jackson Co.” Emily D. P. Young, “Autobiography,” *Woman's Exponent* 13 (December 1, 1884): 103.

90. Kirtland Letter Book, 41, 46; *History of the Church* 1:359, 363; see D&C 97:3–4, 10–13.

91. D&C 97:10–11; letter to “Beloved Bretheren,” August 6, 1833, Joseph Smith Collection, Church Archives. The corrected “pattern” for both the temple and city designs was provided in the August 1833 packet. A note in the hand of Frederick G. Williams on the face of one of the June drawings read, “For your satisfaction we inform you that the plot for the City and the size form and dimensions of the house were given us of the Lord.”

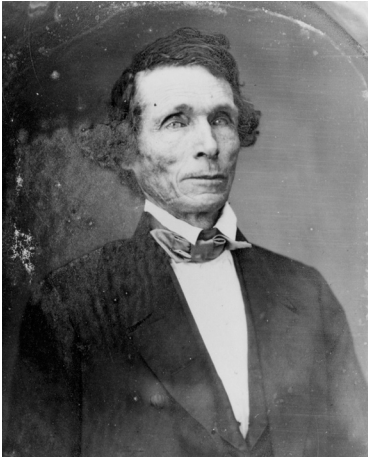


FIG. 8. William W. Phelps (1792–1872). Phelps, though pictured here in his old age, was thirty-nine years old when he became proprietor of the W. W. Phelps & Company printing house at Independence, Missouri. Soon after this he became a member of the United Firm. He and his assistants, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, were assigned to print the scriptures in Zion. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

citizens next attacked the store, which Gilbert quickly closed to save it, and tore down the nearby two-story brick house and printing shop of W. W. Phelps and Company. They threw the type and unfinished papers of the Book of Commandments and *The Evening and the Morning Star* into the street, demolished the building to its foundation and gave the Saints an ultimatum that required them to leave the county beginning at the end of the year.⁹³

wrote, you “are to build two others,” one for the use of “the presidency and one for the printing” of the scriptures. Moreover, they were “to be built as soon after the other as means can be obtained.”⁹² But the instructions from Ohio were never acted upon; disturbances against the Saints commenced before the second package of instructions arrived.

Exiled from Jackson County

The growing Mormon presence in Missouri began to annoy local settlers, and trouble soon erupted. Hostilities against the Latter-day Saints in Jackson County began early in 1832 and mounted until the Saints were driven from the county in November 1833. Severe conflict flared up on July 20, 1833, when the local citizens demonstrated against the Mormons by tarring and feathering Edward Partridge and Charles Allen on the courthouse square. That same day, the brawling

92. Letter to “Beloved Brethren,” August 6, 1833. The August 1833 packet contained copies of D&C 97 and 94, in that order, with the date of both being August 2, 1833.

93. “The Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri,” *Evening and Morning Star* 2, December 1833, 2; Isaac Morley said that he saw “the printing office leveled to the Ground.” Johnson, *Mormon Redress Petitions*, 499; see Isaac McCoy, “The Disturbances in Jackson County,” *Missouri Republican* [St. Louis], December 20, 1833,

Encouraged by Missouri Governor Daniel Dunklin, who advised them to seek redress in the courts, the Saints decided to hold their ground. Upon learning of their revised plans, the restless citizens began attacking Mormon settlements on October 31, 1833. During the first week of November, the mobs continued their assault on the residents of the five Latter-day Saint settlements—three in Kaw township, another at the township line at the ford of the Blue River, and one in Independence.⁹⁴ The Gilbert and Whitney store was damaged by the citizens, goods were destroyed, and accounts receivable were left unpaid.⁹⁵ The attack severely damaged Gilbert's log house and the homes of other Church members in the town and throughout the settlements.⁹⁶ The most severe violence was caused by the rougher Jackson County citizens who harassed, whipped, and drove the 1,200 Latter-day Saints in an unprepared condition from the county.⁹⁷ Traveling mainly northward, the refugees crossed the Missouri River into Clay County.⁹⁸ By the end of November, most Church members were scattered over fifteen miles of wild river bottom in Clay County, south and east of Liberty, the county seat, with many of the assets managed by the United Firm either destroyed or unavailable.⁹⁹

2; Warren A. Jennings, "Factors in the Destruction of the Mormon Press in Missouri, 1833," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 35, no. 1 (1967): 71.

94. On September 11, 1833, the Saints in Jackson County had divided its five settlements into ten ecclesiastical branches. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 65.

95. The largest debts due A. S. Gilbert were from the leaders of the United Firm, apparently from drawing goods from the Gilbert and Whitney store. William W. Phelps owed \$74.31; Edward Partridge owed \$43.68; John Whitmer owed \$14.43. A few small accounts by non-Mormons such as Samuel C. Owens, county clerk, and Jesse Overton were also left unpaid. The total uncollected was \$405.57. "Property of Gilbert & Whitney," A. S. Gilbert, Probate Court, 1838, Clay County, Liberty, Missouri.

96. Mary Elizabeth Rollins, a resident of the Gilbert house, said, "After breaking all the windows, they commenced to tear off the roof of the brick part amidst awful oaths and howls that were terrible to hear." Lightner, "Mary Elizabeth Rollins Lightner," 195–97; see n. 79.

97. See John C. McCoy, "A Famous Town," *Kansas City Journal* (January 18, 1885): 8.

98. Not until the following spring when the citizens learned of the Mormon relief party, Zion's Camp, did they burn the abandoned Mormon homes to discourage their return to Jackson County. W. W. Phelps reported that about 170 buildings were burned; Parley P. Pratt reported it as 203 houses. "The Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri," *Evening and Morning Star* 2, May 1834, 8; June 1834, 8; Pratt, *History of the Late Persecutions*, 23.

99. Sidney Gilbert, the storekeeper, died of cholera near Liberty on June 29, 1834. When his estate was probated in 1838, there was little to show for the assets of Gilbert, Whitney and Company of the United Firm. Five Gilbert and Whitney

Joseph Smith and Governor Dunklin advised the exiled people to continue seeking redress in the courts for the damages they had suffered.¹⁰⁰ Efforts at criminal and civil prosecution in Jackson County, beginning in February 1834, failed because of the hostile climate at Independence, even with the state militia sometimes serving as a guard and with the presence at Independence of the state's Mormon-friendly attorney general, Robert W. Wells.¹⁰¹ Receiving a change of venue to nearby Richmond, Ray County, leaders of the United Firm pressed for two test cases from events that had occurred in Independence on July 20, 1833. The charge of "trespass" was leveled against the Jackson County defendants both for assaulting Bishop Partridge and for destroying the house and press of W. W. Phelps. The two men claimed civil damages of \$50,000 each.¹⁰² The Circuit Court, in its July 1836 term at Richmond, ruled against the mob defendants, but the judge awarded Partridge the frivolous damages of "one cent" and Phelps "seven hundred and fifty Dollars."¹⁰³ Meanwhile, Phelps's press was salvaged and bought by Robert N. Kelly and William H. Davis of Liberty, who paid \$300 to the Mormon-retained attorneys as part payment of their \$1,000 legal bill.¹⁰⁴ The Missouri officers of the United Firm received little recompense from the Missouri courts of law.

The New Kirtland Literary Firm

After the printing office in Independence was destroyed, the leaders of the United Firm turned their attention to establishing a press in Kirtland. On August 18, 1833, Joseph Smith wrote to Phelps and others in Missouri: "We shall get a press immediately in this place and print the *Star* until you can obtain deliverance and git up again."¹⁰⁵ On September 11, five officers

lots, including Lot 51, the site of the Gilbert and Whitney store, were sold for \$800 in 1838; \$600 went to Whitney and \$200 to Gilbert's widow. Jackson County Deed Record, F 52–53.

100. D&C 101:81–89; *History of the Church*, 1:476–78.

101. "The Outrage in Jackson County, Missouri," *Evening and Morning Star* 2, March 1834, 3.

102. Ray County Circuit Court Record, A 245–248; Edward Partridge's handwritten statement of damages. Edward Partridge, "In the Year of Our Lord," 1–3, Church Archives.

103. Ray County Circuit Court Record, July Term 1836, 249–50; see Max H. Parkin, "A History of the Latter-day Saints in Clay County" (PhD diss., Brigham Young University, 1976), 97–108.

104. *Kansas City Star* (February 27, 1972): G 15; *Times and Seasons* 1 (February 1840), 50.

105. Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 310.

of the United Firm met in Kirtland to establish the new press. The officers, Smith, Rigdon, Williams, Whitney, and Cowdery, who had recently arrived from Jackson County as a “delegate to represent the residue” of the United Firm in Missouri, established the Kirtland publishing firm of F. G. Williams and Company, with Williams as publisher.¹⁰⁶ At the meeting, they authorized the new company to print *The Evening and the Morning Star* in Kirtland, which it did for ten months, and at the same meeting they established a replacement paper, the *Latter-day Saints Messenger and Advocate*, with Oliver Cowdery as editor of both papers.¹⁰⁷

A temporary shop for the new press was provided, and early in December 1833, Cowdery and Bishop Whitney arrived from New York with press and type. On December 18, Joseph Smith and others dedicated the press in a room in the French Inn, where Cowdery and others worked until a new building became available near the temple.¹⁰⁸ “Our office,” Oliver wrote of their location in the inn, the soon-to-be-renamed Johnson Inn,¹⁰⁹ “is yet in the brick building, though we expect in the spring to move on the hill.”¹¹⁰ They printed the first issue of the *Star* in December 1833 and the first issue of the *Messenger and Advocate* the following October. By then they were in the printing shop on the upper floor of the newly finished schoolhouse behind the unfinished temple.¹¹¹ Plans to publish Joseph Smith’s revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants, his translation of the Bible, and other projects prompted the Church to bring Phelps and John Whitmer from Clay County to work in the new printing shop. Whitmer arrived on May 17, 1835, and commenced working at the press the next day.¹¹² By June 1835, Whitmer replaced Cowdery as editor of the *Messenger and Advocate*, and Phelps began setting type for the revelations to be published in the new Doctrine and Covenants.

106. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24.

107. D&C 104:29; *Evening and Morning Star* 2, September 1834, 8; see also Crawley, *A Descriptive Bibliography of the Mormon Church*, 1:47–49.

108. Kirtland Letter Book, 58; see *History of the Church*, 1:418, 448, 465.

109. John Johnson was granted a tavern license on April 5, 1834; Geauga County Court of Common Pleas, April 5, 1834, Book M, 184.

110. Oliver Cowdery, Letter Book, 22, typescript, Church Archives.

111. The school opened in December 1834. *Messenger and Advocate* 1, February 1835, 80; Anderson, *Lucy’s Book*, 572–74, 579. The building was 30’ x 38’. Church meetings were being held in the schoolroom by August 11, 1834. Kirtland Council Minutes, 52; *History of the Church*, 1:418, 448, 451, 465.

112. John Whitmer varies between May 16 and May 17 as his arrival date. “Day and Account Book,” 22, John Whitmer Papers, Church Archives; Westergren, *The Book of John Whitmer*, 137.

Inasmuch as the original literary firm established in Hiram and implemented in Independence preceded the United Firm, it functioned independently at first.¹¹³ But at Independence, W. W. Phelps and Company operated as a stewardship of Phelps, Cowdery, and Whitney, officers of the United Firm.¹¹⁴ In the meeting of September 11, 1833, the leaders established the new literary firm at Kirtland as F. G. Williams and Company, under the aegis of the United Firm.¹¹⁵ This publishing business was the printing office referred to in the April 1834 revelation that disbanded the United Firm and distributed its properties.¹¹⁶

The United Firm Is Replaced by the High Councils

In February 1834, two months before the April revelation was received, Joseph Smith organized a standing high council of the Church in Kirtland. This council of fifteen high priests, three presidents and a body of twelve counselors, possessed legislative and ecclesiastical authority.¹¹⁷ Six members of the high council were also members of the United Firm.¹¹⁸

After the Prophet received the April revelation ending the firm's joint association between Independence and Kirtland, the United Firm's policy-making functions at Kirtland soon shifted to the new high council rather than to the newly designated "United Firm of . . . the City of Kirtland," as directed in the revelation.¹¹⁹ At a high council meeting on September 24, 1834, its leaders uncharacteristically began to discuss administrative and financial concerns previously handled by the United Firm. For example, the high council planned a forthcoming project for the new literary firm and elected the presidency of the high council (Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams) and high counselor Oliver Cowdery, all former members of the United Firm, to manage the undertaking.¹²⁰ The high council authorized them to take charge of "arranging and publishing" the

113. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 46.

114. See n. 162 herein and the text associated with ns. 27–33.

115. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24.

116. D&C 104:29.

117. The minutes referred to the new high council as "a standing council for the church." Kirtland Council Minutes, 29–39; D&C 102:1.

118. The six members of the United Firm were Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams as high council presidents and Oliver Cowdery, John Johnson, and Martin Harris as "counsellors."

119. Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C, 31; see also D&C 104:48.

120. This high council committee also comprised the Presidency of the Church. Oliver Cowdery would be ordained to the Church Presidency as Assistant President on December 5, 1834. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:24; 2:36.

revelations in the forthcoming Doctrine and Covenants and of receiving “the avails” from its sales.¹²¹ Increasingly, the Kirtland high council made financial decisions that typically had been made by the United Firm. It advised Bishop Whitney on the operation of his store, directed the payment of debt, and counseled Church members on their land purchases in Missouri.¹²² The support gained from the wide leadership base of the high council seemed beneficial. Accordingly, the leaders of the high council, who also had been officers of the original United Firm, functioned implicitly as the leaders of the new so-called United Firm of Kirtland.

Events in Missouri eventually followed a similar course. About two months after he received the April revelation on distributing United Firm properties, Joseph Smith was in Clay County with Zion’s Camp delivering relief to the Saints. While there, the Prophet organized a Missouri high council to govern the spiritual affairs of the Saints in exile; this high council would later also extend its ecclesiastical reach beyond spiritual duties. On July 7, 1834, at the Zion’s Camp discharge site two miles south of Liberty, Joseph Smith appointed David Whitmer, W. W. Phelps, and John Whitmer presidents of the Missouri high council, with twelve high councillors to advise them, as at Kirtland. Following the Prophet’s return to Ohio, this high council slowly began to direct financial matters. For example, in 1836 it appointed elders to canvas Church branches in several eastern states to borrow and collect money for the “benefit of ‘Poor Bleeding Zion.’”¹²³ Later, it acknowledged that the “High Council and Bishop of Zion” were appointed “to do business for Zion.”¹²⁴ Consequently, the proposed new separate United Firms of Kirtland and Zion, as named in the revelation to disband the firm, remained irrelevant and nonexistent apart from their embodiment in the high councils. Put another way, the high councils fulfilled that part of the revelation by each temporarily functioning in the role of the local firm. Likewise, the work of the treasurer and treasury, also named in the revelation, was later performed by the bishop and superintended by the Church Presidency, as later developments show.¹²⁵ Clearly, the administrative and financial activities of the United Firm at Kirtland were continued by the same leaders but in their developing ecclesiastical roles.

121. Kirtland Council Minutes, 76.

122. Kirtland Council Minutes, 76–80.

123. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 105. There are no minutes for the Clay County high council meetings in 1835 and only one for 1836.

124. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 108.

125. D&C 104:48, 67; see ns. 223 and 225 herein. The author has not found any documents of the early Church after April 1834 that refer to the separate United Firms or their treasuries.

Tension in the United Firm

The April 1834 revelation speaks of jarring problems among the members of the United Firm. The “transgressor” among them “cannot escape my wrath,” the revelation stated.¹²⁶ Dissonance among them had roots early in the firm’s organization and continued during the two years of its existence. In fact, problems between the leaders in Ohio and Missouri arose as early as July 1831 at the time Zion was dedicated. That summer, Bishop Partridge had reservations about the Prophet’s conjectured size of the branch that awaited their arrival in Jackson County. According to Ezra Booth, one of the elders traveling to Missouri that summer, the Prophet expected a large branch of the Church resulting from Oliver Cowdery’s missionary work there the previous spring, but when they arrived there were only a few members. What Booth believed was Joseph’s errant prediction and his other shortcomings soon contributed to his own apostasy, and he attempted to take others with him. In a lengthy letter to Edward Partridge reviewing his complaints, Booth remonstrated with the bishop to join him and leave the faith, but his appeal bore no fruit.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, Sidney Rigdon kept alive his own complaint against Partridge for his doubts and possibly for other concerns until the two men met at Independence in April 1832. There the disagreements were “settled” and “the hearts of all run together in love,” wrote John Whitmer.¹²⁸ Then, in a climate of peace, they organized the United Firm.

As the United Firm was established, its leaders made a covenant of solidarity. Sometimes, however, they had trouble fulfilling their ideal. Distance, differing views on administrative policy, misunderstandings, and perhaps personality variances sometimes got in their way. In November 1832, a problem between the leaders in Kirtland and in Independence prompted a chastising revelation directed at Bishop Partridge that threatened to replace him as bishop in Zion if he did not repent. He is the “man, who was called of God and appointed, that putteth forth his hand to steady the ark of God,”¹²⁹ it said. But after an accompanying rebuke, the

126. D&C 104:4–10.

127. Ezra Booth, “Letter VII,” *Ohio Star*, November 24, 1831, 1; Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled*, 200–210. See D&C 58:14–18; *History of the Church*, 1:215–17; for a consideration of the relationship between Booth and Bishop Partridge, see Max H Parkin, *Conflict at Kirtland* (Salt Lake City: Department of Seminaries and Institutes of Religion, 1967), 77–88.

128. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 41, 45; *History of the Church*, 1:267.

129. D&C 85:8. Sometimes problems arose over Bishop Newel K. Whitney at Kirtland. See Kirtland Council Minutes, 25.

crisis passed and a successor was never named.¹³⁰ In January 1833, when another problem between the two groups arose, the Prophet sent Phelps a copy of a revelation that Joseph termed the “olive leaf” to uplift the Saints in Missouri, but he sent it with a letter containing a grim message: “If Zion will not purify herself, . . . [God] will seek another people.”¹³¹ Also in an accompanying letter, two representatives of a council of high priests at Kirtland censured Partridge, Gilbert, and Phelps individually for hasty words; the representatives then added a caution from Joseph Smith, that if Zion did not improve “the Lord will seek another place.” In their letter, the two spokesmen, Hyrum Smith and Orson Hyde, excoriated the three men. “We feel more like weeping over Zion,” they wrote, “than we do like rejoicing over her.”¹³²

After the Saints were driven from Jackson County, however, the leaders in Ohio expressed sympathy and love for their exiled brethren. On December 10, 1833, the Prophet wrote to Partridge, Phelps, and others in Missouri: “Brethren, when we learn [of] your sufferings it awakens ev[er] sympathy of our hearts; it weighs us down; we cannot refrain from tears.”¹³³ Nevertheless, problems continued. From Clay County, Phelps wrote “sharp, piercing, & cutting reproofs” against the Kirtland leaders, as Joseph quoted him in a letter dated March 30, 1834. The Prophet answered Phelps, Partridge, and “others of the firm”: “O, how wounding, & how poignant must it be to receive chastisement & reproofs, for things that we are not guilty of from a source we least expect them, arising from a distrustful, a fearful, & jealous spirit.”¹³⁴ Perhaps to soften his reprimand, however, Joseph Smith added that he would “forgive, and . . . forebear, with all long suffering and patience.”¹³⁵

During the winter of 1834, alarm in Kirtland was heightened for another reason. A former Church member, Philastus Hurlbut, threatened the life of Joseph Smith and helped excite local hostility against the Saints.¹³⁶ That winter, a mob passed through Kirtland at night threatening

130. “One Mighty and Strong,” *Messages of the First Presidency*, comp. James R. Clark, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1965), 4:113, 117, November 13, 1905.

131. D&C 88; Kirtland Letter Book, 19; *History of the Church*, 1:316.

132. Kirtland Letter Book, 21; *History of the Church*, 1:319–20.

133. Kirtland Letter Book, 72; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 330.

134. Cowdery, Letter Book, 31; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Prophet Joseph Smith*, 334–35; *History of the Church*, 1:317–21.

135. Cowdery, Letter Book, 34; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337. The Prophet’s letter was dated March 30, 1834.

136. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:19; *History of the Church*, 2:46–49; see David W. Grua, “Joseph Smith and the 1834 D. P. Hurlbut Case,” *BYU Studies* 44, no. 1 (2005): 33–54.

to tear down the walls of the partially built temple. Heber C. Kimball remembered, “We had to guard ourselves night after night, and for weeks were not permitted to take off our clothes, and were obliged to lay with our firelocks in our arms.”¹³⁷ Joseph feared also that the press office and school-room near the temple might be damaged. These tense times prompted Joseph to write to Partridge about his fears: “We know not how soon [the enemy] may be permitted to follow the example of the Missourians,” he wrote December 5, 1833.¹³⁸ In January the Prophet “united in prayer” with other members of the firm. Sympathetically, he prayed on behalf of the exiled Saints in Clay County “that they perish not with hunger nor cold.” Then, turning to local concerns, Joseph prayed “that the Lord would also hold the lives of all the United Firm, and not suffer that any of them shall be taken” and added that Bishop Whitney “will have means sufficient to discharge every debt that the Firm owes.”¹³⁹

Debt of the United Firm at Kirtland

Besides threats from their neighbors, Joseph Smith and other firm leaders found that by March 1834 the mounting debt of the United Firm at Kirtland had become a haunting concern. Funds were scarce and payments were either due or soon would be. When the United Firm was organized at Independence in 1832, Joseph and the partners authorized a loan for \$15,000, which Whitney was appointed to acquire for the firm.¹⁴⁰ Of this the Prophet wrote, “Arrangements were . . . made for supplying the saints with stores in Missouri and Ohio,” and he later authorized the use of credit to buy paper for Phelps’s press.¹⁴¹ Whitney made yearly trips to Buffalo or New York City to restock the store in Kirtland and probably the store in Independence as well. In October 1832, the Prophet traveled to New York with Whitney on one of his buying trips. “It is [a] tedious Job to stand on the feet all day to select goods,” Joseph wrote to his wife, Emma, concerning the task that faced Whitney. While the two men stayed in a boarding-house on Pearl Street in the merchant district of New York City, Joseph

137. Heber C. Kimball, “Extract from the Journal of Elder Heber C. Kimball,” *Times and Seasons* 6 (January 15, 1845): 771.

138. Kirtland Letter Book, 68–69. The problem persisted; Cowdery wrote on January 21, 1834, reporting on events on the previous week: “They . . . fired cannon, we suppose to alarm us.” Cowdery, Letter Book, 22. For more on the problem, see Parkin, *Conflict at Kirtland*, 204–10.

139. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:18–19.

140. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 48.

141. Unpublished revelation, March 20, 1832, Kirtland Revelation Book, 19; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:382.

further observed that “Brother Whitney is received with great kindness by all his old acquaintance[s].”¹⁴² In December 1833, Whitney was again in New York, this time with Oliver Cowdery to buy the press for Kirtland. A month before the April 1834 revelation was received, Joseph Smith wrote to Edward Partridge, “We have run into debt for the press, and also to obtain money to pay the New York debt for Zion.”¹⁴³ Additionally, their first payment on the French farm was due, further stressing their resources.¹⁴⁴

Besides its outside debt, the United Firm was also burdened with unpaid bills among its officers. Partners of the firm in Kirtland accrued debt as they drew from the Whitney store either as paying customers or as beneficiaries of the Lord’s storehouse. Nevertheless, Whitney kept a record of accounts receivable on members of the firm. In spring 1834, Joseph sought to have these internal debts canceled. Frederick G. Williams wrote that when the Prophet received the revelation to distribute the assets of the United Firm, he received another revelation, but one “not written,” he said. It required “every one of which were then called the firm to give up all notes and demands that they had against each other . . . and all be equal.”¹⁴⁵ Whitney stoically wrote, “Joseph said it must be done.”¹⁴⁶ Whitney’s account showed that the debt owed to him by the five principal Kirtland members of the United Firm totaled \$3,635.35.¹⁴⁷ Compliant, Whitney accepted Joseph’s direction “without any value recd,” he noted.¹⁴⁸ Williams was also asked to relinquish his claim on all members of the firm, “which was the cause,” he wrote, “that I never got any thing for my farm.”¹⁴⁹

Meanwhile in February 1834, the Prophet received a revelation to go east with others to raise recruits and funds for Zion’s Camp to help the Saints in Missouri. Joseph decided to use the trip also for raising money to pay on the Kirtland debt. Joseph Smith and Parley P. Pratt, his

142. Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 279–80.

143. Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337.

144. Staker, “‘Thou Art the Man,’” 104, 111.

145. “Statement of fact relative to Smith and myself,” Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives.

146. “Memo of Balances,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

147. Newel K. Whitney reported that the balances owed him on April 23, 1834, were from Joseph Smith, \$1,151.31; Sidney Rigdon, \$777.98; John Johnson, \$567.68; F. G. Williams & Co., \$584.14; Williams personally, 485.67; and Oliver Cowdery, \$68.57. “Memo of Balances,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections; Cook, *Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 211.

148. “Memo of Balances,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

149. This suggests that consecrations were not always seen by the donor fully as freewill offerings. Frederick G. Williams, “Statement of Fact,” Frederick G. Williams Papers, Church Archives.

companion, left Kirtland on February 26, as did Orson Hyde and Orson Pratt and other traveling pairs.¹⁵⁰ Three weeks later, at a conference of elders in Livingston County, New York, Joseph reviewed his Kirtland financial concerns: “Two Thousand Dollars . . . will deliver Kirtland from Debt for the present,” he told the audience.¹⁵¹ In response, the conference appointed five elders to raise the funds. The next few weeks, however, saw them raising but little money. On April 7, after he returned to Kirtland and while lamenting the poor collection, Joseph wrote to Hyde: “If this Church . . . will not help us, when they can do it without sacrifice . . . God shall take away their talent.”¹⁵² On that same day, Joseph met with Whitney, Cowdery, and Williams and prayed that the Lord would “deliver the firm from debt.”¹⁵³ On April 10, while pondering their difficulty, Joseph discussed the problem with the officers of the “united firm . . . [and] agreed that the firm should be desolv[ed].” He wrote, “Each one [is to] have their stewardship set off to them.”¹⁵⁴

Thirteen days later, on April 23, 1834, the day before Orson Pratt returned to Kirtland,¹⁵⁵ Joseph Smith received the revelation to distribute the Kirtland resources of the United Firm to its members and directed them to manage the properties as personal stewardships. Two days after he arrived, Orson Pratt copied the revelation into the Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, without providing any heading other than the date. Four months later, Orson Hyde copied the revelation from that book into the Kirtland Revelation Book and added the heading: “Revelation given April 23d 1834 appointing to each member of the united firm their Stewardship.”¹⁵⁶

150. D&C 103:36–40; Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:21; Elden J. Watson, *The Orson Pratt Journals* (Salt Lake City: Elden J. Watson, 1975), 34.

151. Kirtland Council Minutes, 42–43.

152. Kirtland Letter Book, 82–83; *History of the Church*, 2:48. At the Livingston County, New York, meeting, Orson Pratt was voted to return to Kirtland.

153. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:28.

154. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:29. He did not name the members of the United Firm with whom he met.

155. Orson Pratt and Orson Hyde, who left Kirtland together on February 26, separated and Pratt returned to Kirtland alone on April 24.

156. Kirtland Revelation Book, 100. On April 28, 1834, an uncanonized revelation referred to the “settlement of the United Firm,” the last time the firm is so referenced in the early documents. Kirtland Revelation Book, 111. Orson Pratt’s recording of the revelation that follows is in the Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C, 19–43.

Sec. 104

April 23, 1834

Verily, I say unto you my friends,
I give unto you counsel & a commandment concerning all the properties which belong to the Firm, which I commanded to be organized & established to be a United Firm, & an everlasting Firm, for the benefit of my church, & for the salvation of men until I come, with a promise immutable & unchangeable, that inasmuch as those whom I commanded were faithful, they should be blessed with multiplicity of blessings; but inasmuch as they were not faithful, they were nigh unto cursing. Therefore

FIG. 9. The first page of the revelation to end the United Firm and to distribute its properties, as Orson Pratt copied it into the "Book of Commandments Laws and Covenants" (D&C 104:1-3). In the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Church leaders changed the name of the "United Firm" to read "United Order" and changed other words to protect the firm and its officers from an unsympathetic public. Someone later added the words "Sec. 104" in pencil at the top. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

**Orson Pratt's Copy of the Revelation in Book of
Commandments Law and Covenants That Became
Doctrine and Covenants 104**

April 23, 1834

Verily I say unto you my friends, I give unto you council & a commandment concerning all the properties which belong to the Firm,¹⁵⁷ which I commanded to be organized & established to be a United Firm,¹⁵⁸ & an everlasting Firm,¹⁵⁹ for the benefit of my church, & for the salvation of men until I come, with a promise immutable & unchangeable, that inasmuch as those whom I commanded¹⁶⁰ were faithful, they should be blessed with a multiplicity of blessings; but inasmuch as they were not faithful, they were nigh unto cursing. Therefore [p. 19]¹⁶¹ inasmuch as some of my servants have not kept the commandment but have broken the covenant, by covetousness¹⁶² & with feigned words,¹⁶³ I have cursed them with

157. D&C 104:1. Although this revelation is “a commandment concerning all the properties” of the United Firm, only those in Kirtland are mentioned specifically in the revelation.

158. D&C 104:1. The title “United Firm” or “firm” was used by Pratt and Hyde for this revelation and by others. Kirtland Revelation Book, 16, 100–107, 111; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45, 47–48; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 34, 43, 334.

159. D&C 104:1. The word “firm” was replaced with “order” in the following references: D&C 78:4, 11; 82:20; 90:1.

160. D&C 104:2. There were twelve known members of the United Firm.

161. D&C 104:4. Page numbering in the Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C.

162. D&C 104:4. While not naming members of the firm, the revelation was referring to its members in Missouri who sometimes entertained reproachful attitudes. In a letter dated March 30, 1834, “To Edward [Partridge], William [Phelps], and others of the firm,” Joseph Smith referred to the “wickedness of my brethren,” and chided Phelps in particular for speaking of the press as “my press, my type, &c.” The Prophet asked Phelps, “How came they to be ‘yours?’” Cowdery, Letter Book, 36; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337–38.

163. D&C 104:4. The charge of using “feigned words” may have stemmed from separate letters, not now available, sent to the leaders at Kirtland by John Corrill, William W. Phelps, and Sidney Gilbert in Missouri in 1832. Corrill had complained of Joseph “seeking after monarchical power and authority,” and Gilbert expressed other “low, dark and

a verry sore & grievous curse; for I the Lord have decreed in my heart, that inasmuch as any <man> belonging to the Firm, shall be found a transgressor, or in other words, shall brake the covenant with which ye are bound,¹⁶⁴ he shall be cursed in his life & shall be trodden down by whom I will; for I the Lord am not to be mocked in these things; & all this that the innocent among you may not be condemned with the unjust, & that the guilty among you may not escape because I the [p. 20] Lord have promised unto you a crown of glory at my right hand.¹⁶⁵ Therefore, inasmuch as ye are found transgressors, ye cannot escape my wrath in your lives; & inasmuch as ye are cut off by transgression ye cannot escape the buffetings of Satan¹⁶⁶ unto the day of Redemption. And I now give unto you power from this verry hour, that if any man among you, of the Firm, is found a transgressor, & repenteth not of the evil, that ye shall deliver him over unto the buffetings of Satan, & he shall have no more power to bring evil upon you; but as long as ye hold communion with transgressors, behold, they [p. 21] bring evil upon you.¹⁶⁷ It is wisdom in me, therefore, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall organize yourselves, & appoint every man his stewardship,¹⁶⁸ that every man may give an account unto me of the stewardship which is appointed unto him; for it is

blind insinuations.” Kirtland Letter Book, 21; see *History of the Church*, 1:318–19. In March 1834, Joseph Smith answered complaints against the Missouri leaders who were trying “to steady the ark.” Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 337.

164. D&C 104:5. Details of the covenant or the bond are not given. See D&C 78:11–12; 82:11. At the organization of the United Firm, William W. Phelps and Sidney Gilbert were appointed to “draft the bond” binding members of the firm. Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45; see also *History of the Church*, 1:363.

165. D&C 104:7; D&C 76:20, 23, 108; 78:15.

166. D&C 104:9. D&C 78:12; 82:21. The reprimand may have been only to appeal to the leaders in Missouri or Ohio not to sin further. No officer of the firm was excommunicated from the Church resulting from these accusations.

167. Between D&C 104:10–11. This sentence, containing the previous fifteen words, was also in the Kirtland Revelation Book, 101, but was not printed in the Doctrine and Covenants.

168. D&C 104:11. This is the central message of the revelation—to “appoint every man his stewardship.” See n. 173 herein.

expedent, that I the Lord, should make every man accountable, as stewards over earthly Blessings, which I have made & prepared for my creatures. I the Lord stretched out the heavens; & builded the earth as a verry handy work, & all things therein are mine,¹⁶⁹ & it is my business to provide for my saints, for all things are mine; but it must needs be done in mine [p. 22] own way: & behold, this is the way that I the Lord hath decreed to provide for my saints, that the poor shall be exalted in that the rich are made low; for the earth is full, & there is enough & to spare; yea, I have prepared all things, & have given unto the children of men to be agents unto themselves.¹⁷⁰ Therefore if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, & impart not his portion according to the law of my gospel unto the poor & the needy,¹⁷¹ he shall with [the] Diveles¹⁷² lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment. And now verily, I say unto you concerning the properties of the Firm,¹⁷³ Let my servant [p. 23] Sidney [Rigdon]¹⁷⁴ have appointed unto him the place where he now resides,¹⁷⁵ & the lot of the Tanery for his

169. D&C 104:14. God as the Divine Creator allows man to be stewards over his possessions. See D&C 104:54–56.

170. D&C 104:17; 58:26–28; see 2 Nephi 2:26–27.

171. D&C 104:18. The “law of my Gospel unto the poor” was revealed in 1831 as described in D&C 42:30–39 and in subsequent revelations: D&C 51:2–5; 70:4–10; 72:2–6; 78:3–6. The bishops under the direction of the United Firm had the responsibility of caring for the poor. D&C 78:3; 82:12.

172. D&C 104:18. “Diveles” changed to “wicked” in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:2).

173. This begins the naming of the recipients of stewardships.

174. D&C 104:20. Last names have been added throughout the revelation for convenience. Orson Pratt added full names in brackets in the 1876 edition to identify recipients of the pseudonyms.

175. D&C 104:20. As a recipient of a stewardship, Sidney Rigdon received the place where he “now resides.” Rigdon was living on a one-acre lot on Chillicothe Road across from the temple lot. On February 25, 1832, Newel K. Whitney purchased the lot for \$90 from Jemima Doane who had purchased it from Peter French in 1827 for \$40. Geauga County Deed Record, 15:322; Staker, “History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery,” Appendix A, 2. At the time of Whitney’s purchase, Doane was residing there in a log house with her children. In 1832, after Rigdon and Joseph Smith were mobbed at Hiram, Portage County, Rigdon moved his family into the former Doane house, then owned by Whitney. In compliance

stewardship¹⁷⁶ for his support while he is labouring in my vinyard,¹⁷⁷ even as I will, when I shall command him; & let all things be done according to counsel of the Firm, & united consent, or voice of the Firm which dwells in the land of Kirtland.¹⁷⁸ And this stewardship & blessing, I the Lord confer upon my servant Sidney [Rigdon] for a blessing upon him, & upon his seed after him, & I will multiply blessings upon him & upon his seed after him inasmuch as he shall be humble [p. 24] before me. And again let my servant Martin [Harris] have appointed unto him

with the above revelation, on April 30, 1834, Whitney transferred ownership to Rigdon. The lot and house were valued at \$100. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:488. Because log houses were not taxed in Geauga County, the lot in 1835 was valued at \$12 for tax purposes. Geauga County Tax Record, 508 (1835). Rigdon had built a frame house on the site by the time he sold it to William Marks on April 7, 1837, for \$1,500. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:535.

176. D&C 104:20. The tannery assigned to Sidney Rigdon was located on the lot just east of the N. K. Whitney and Company store. In October 1832, Arnold Mason, a non-Mormon, had purchased this one-acre lot from Peter French and soon built a tannery on the site. On May 3, 1834, ten days after the revelation assigned these properties, Mason sold the lot and tannery to Sidney Rigdon for \$450. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:487; Staker, "History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery," Appendix A, 2–3.

177. D&C 104:20. Sidney Rigdon, who had served since March 8, 1832, as counselor to Joseph Smith in the presidency of the High Priesthood, needed an income. He had worked as a journeyman tanner his last two years in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, before moving to Ohio in 1825, but he had not taken well to the "humble occupation" of a tanner. *Times and Seasons* 4 (May 15, 1843): 193. Soon after receiving the tannery, Rigdon engaged his mother, Nancy Rigdon, to manage the firm; she in turn sought management assistance from William Marks and an experienced tanner, Zerah Coles. *Northern Times*, 1, December 2, 1835, 4; see Staker, "History of the Kirtland Flats Tannery," 6–7. On October 17, 1836, Rigdon sold the business to his mother for \$450. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:71. Nancy Rigdon sold the tannery on January 18, 1838, for \$1,000 to George and Lawrence Frank. Geauga County Deed Record, 25:303; *History of the Church*, 3:1; see Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994), 211.

178. D&C 104:21. Members of the United Firm who composed the "council of the Firm" at Kirtland were Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, Newel K. Whitney, John Johnson, Martin Harris, and, recently arrived from Missouri, Oliver Cowdery.

for his stewardship the lot of land which my servant John [Johnson] obtained in exchange for his farm,¹⁷⁹ for him & his seed after him; & inasmuch as he is faithful I will multiply blessings upon him & his seed after him. And let my servant Martin [Harris] devote his moneys for the printing of my word, according as my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] shall direct.¹⁸⁰

And again let my servant Frederick [G. Williams] have the place upon which he now dwells,¹⁸¹ and let my servant Oliver [Cowdery] have the lot which is set off joining the house which

179. D&C 104:24. John Johnson sold his 160-acre farm at Hiram, Portage County, to Jude and Patty Stevens on May 10, 1834, for \$3,000 plus the Stevens farm (Township Lot 45, a mile southwest of the temple) in Kirtland, which the revelation awarded to Martin Harris. Portage County Deed Record, 18:393–94. While the Stevenses transferred the 105-acre lot to Harris, they delayed recording the sale until November 15, 1838. Geauga County Land Record, 27:250.

180. D&C 104:26. Martin Harris, who had paid \$3,000 for the publication of the Book of Mormon in 1829 and had continued using his resources for the Church since that time, was again asked to contribute money. See Peter Crawley, “A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 4 (1972): 471; Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 363. In 1831, Martin was listed as one who “may have claim on the Church for recompense.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 32.

181. D&C 104:27. The location where Frederick G. Williams “now dwells” is unknown. When Joseph Smith arrived in Kirtland in February 1831, he visited the Williams family, probably residing on their recently purchased farm. Soon after this a revelation stated, let a “house be prepared” for the Williams family. Kirtland Revelation Book, 92. On October 10, 1832, a conference of elders decided that the Williams family should be “provided with a comfortable dwelling according to the commandment.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 15–16. Still, a year and half later, on March 8, 1833, a revelation instructed Joseph Smith, “Let there be a place provided” for “Frederick G. Williams.” D&C 90:19. Neither Church nor family records identify the location of the Williams residence. Correspondence between Dr. Frederick G. Williams, historian and great-great-grandson of President Frederick G. Williams, Provo, Utah, and the author, January 13, 2003, Provo, Utah.

[p. 25] is to be for the printing office¹⁸² which is lot number one;¹⁸³ & also the lot upon which his father resides;¹⁸⁴ & let my servants Frederick [G. Williams] & Oliver [Cowdery] have the printing office & all things that pertain unto it; & this shall be their stewardship which shall be appointed unto them;¹⁸⁵ & inasmuch as they are faithful, behold, I will bless them, & multiply blessings upon them, & this is the beginning of the stewardship which I have appointed unto them; for them & their seed after them; & inasmuch as they are faithful I will multiply blessings upon them & their seed after them, even a multiplicity of blessings. [p. 26] And again, let my servant John [Johnson] have the house

182. D&C 104:28. Plans to construct a combined printing office and schoolhouse were in place by October 1833, and the building was finished a year later. *History of the Church*, 1:418. The building was located on the temple lot west of the temple, next to lot number one. See n. 183 below.

183. D&C 104:28. "Lot number one," granted to Oliver Cowdery, was located just west of the printing office and the temple and labeled "O. Cowdery" lot "1" on the 1833 Kirtland Plat Map. According to the deed, John Johnson sold this lot to Cowdery on May 5, 1834, two weeks after the revelation assigned him the lot. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:479. On May 27, 1837, Cowdery sold the lot back to John Johnson, who sold it later that year to Oliver Granger. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:374; 25:552.

184. D&C 104:28. William Cowdery, Oliver's father, resided on lot 6, five doors west of Cowdery's lot 1. See n. 183 above. John Johnson, a United Firm land agent and later owner of the French farm, where these lots were located, sold lots 1 and 6 to Oliver Cowdery on May 5, 1834, for \$110, probably intending lot 6 for Oliver's father. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:479. On June 2, 1835, Leonard Rich sold William Cowdery a half-acre lot about a half mile west of the temple lot. John Johnson repurchased lots 1 and 6 from Oliver Cowdery on May 27, 1837. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:39; 24:374. William Cowdery died in Kirtland on February 26, 1845.

185. D&C 104:29. Frederick G. Williams and Oliver Cowdery received the Kirtland literary firm of F. G. Williams & Company including the press, located on the temple lot just west of the temple, where the two men operated the press as a joint stewardship. The officers of the United Firm had established the Kirtland literary firm on September 11, 1833. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24.

in which he lives,¹⁸⁶ & the farm,¹⁸⁷ all, save the ground which has been reserved for the building of my houses, which pertains to that farm,¹⁸⁸ & those lots which have been named for my servant Oliver [Cowdery],¹⁸⁹ & inasmuch as he is faithful I will multiply blessings upon him. And it is my will that he should sell the lots that are laid off for the building up of the city of my saints,¹⁹⁰ inasmuch as it shall be made known to him by the voice of the spirit & according to the counsel of the Firm;¹⁹¹ & by the voice of the Firm, & this is the beginning of the steward <ship> [p. 27] which I

186. D&C 104:34. John Johnson lived on lot 4, four doors west of the temple, on the new city's center block. After moving to Kirtland from Hiram in June 1833, Johnson was given the French Inn in which to live after he had cleared "the incumbrances" imposed upon it by a previous renter. Afterwards he moved to lot 4. The date of the move is unknown. D&C 96:9; Geauga County Deed Record, 22:497; Lamar C. Berrett, ed., *Sacred Places: Ohio and Illinois* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book, 2002), 31. In 1841, two years before his death, Johnson sold lot 4 to his son John Jr. Lake County Deed Record, A:539.

187. D&C 104:34. "Farm" changed to "inheritance" in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:6). The farm was the former French farm with the brick inn. Joseph Smith acknowledged Johnson's generosity to the Church, probably referring to the sale of Johnson's Portage County farm. In a blessing given on April 3, 1836, Joseph said, "As thou hast been liberal with thy property as befit the saints thou shalt have an hundred fold." "John Johnson Blessing," 1836, John Johnson Papers, Church Archives. Johnson did not take title to the French farm from the N. K. Whitney and Company, however, until September 23, 1836. Geauga County Deed Record, 22:497; see n. 179 herein.

188. D&C 104:34. "Farm" changed to "inheritance" in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:6). The "ground" refers to the Kirtland Temple lot on the French farm, and "my houses" refers to the three temples to be constructed on it and on the adjacent lot on the Williams farm. D&C 96; see n. 200 herein.

189. D&C 104:34. John Johnson was denied the two lots assigned to Oliver Cowdery on the south edge of the French farm. D&C 104:28; see ns. 183 and 184 herein.

190. D&C 104:36. John Johnson was here authorized to sell lots that were platted and subdivided on the French farm, particularly those near the temple lot on the south edge of the farm. In selling the lots, Johnson was acting as agent for the United Firm with Newel K. Whitney, who also sold lots. D&C 96:2-3; "List of Town Lots," Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

191. D&C 104:36.

have appointed unto him, for a blessing unto him & his seed after him;¹⁹² & inasmuch as he is faithful I will multiply a multiplicity of blessings upon him.

And again let my servant Newel [K. Whitney] have appointed unto him the houses & lot where he now resides,¹⁹³ & the lot & building on which the store stands,¹⁹⁴ & the lot also which is on the corner south of the store,¹⁹⁵ & also the lot on which the Ashery

192. D&C 104:37. The statement “his seed after him” allowed John Johnson to transfer his stewardship, the former French farm, to his son, John Jr., which he did on May 29, 1837. Johnson, however, sold only the remaining eighty acres, excluding the lots near the temple. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:278.

193. D&C 104:39. Returned to Newel K. Whitney were the two houses he had built on an acre lot. On June 1, 1822, Whitney had purchased from Peter French the lot on the northwest corner of the village’s main intersection, on which he built two houses. Whitney built the first house, 20’ x 40’ with two stories, in about 1822, where he and Elizabeth, his wife, lived upstairs for about two years while Newel kept shop below. In about 1824, just to the west and on the same lot, Whitney built a frame house, 25.5’ x 28.5’ with a 12’ x 20’ summer kitchen in the rear; here the family resided until they moved to Missouri in 1838. Staker, “Thou Art the Man,” 85, 88, 101. Algernon Sidney Gilbert, Newel K. Whitney’s business partner, and his wife, Elizabeth, probably lived in the first house, the vacated apartment-store, until they moved to Missouri in the fall of 1831. Whitney’s parents were probably living in it at the time of the revelation. Horace K. Whitney to Elizabeth Ann Whitney, February 16, 1870, Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

194. D&C 104:39. The “lot & building” refer to the main Whitney store of “N. K. Whitney & Co.” and the lot on which it stood. On April 13, 1826, Newel K. Whitney had purchased this lot from Peter French, comprising .26 acres, at the northeast corner of the main Kirtland village intersection. Geauga County Deed Record, 14:385. By January 1827, Whitney had built a two-story frame store on this lot and stocked it with merchandise. The “Whitney Store” was listed in land and tax records as “N. K. Whitney & Co.” and “Newel K. Whitney & Co.” Geauga County Tax Record, 507 (1834). Whitney took Algernon Sidney Gilbert as a partner in the store in February 1827, shortly after Gilbert arrived in town. Previously, Whitney had served as a clerk in Gilbert’s store in nearby Mentor, Ohio. Orson F. Whitney, “The Aaronic Priesthood,” *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 124.

195. D&C 104:39. The lot “on the corner south” of the Whitney Store was on the southeast corner of Kirtland’s main village intersection. The lot was jointly owned by Newel K. Whitney and Sidney Gilbert. Gilbert

is situated.¹⁹⁶ And all this I have appointed unto my servant Newel [K. Whitney] for his stewardship, for a blessing upon him & his seed after him, for the benefit of the mercantile establishment of my Firm, which [p. 28] I have established for my Stake in the land of Kirtland;¹⁹⁷ yea, verily, this is the stewardship which I have appointed unto my servant Newel [K. Whitney], even this whole mercantile establishment, him & his agent, & his seed after him,¹⁹⁸ & inasmuch as he is faithful in keeping the commandments which I have given unto him, I will multiply blessings upon him, & his seed after him, even a multiplicity of blessings.

never owned land in Kirtland himself, and this was the only property the two men owned together. Peter French sold this one-acre lot to “N. K. Whitney & Co.” on March 5, 1829. Geauga County Deed Record, 12:627.

The revelation assigned the lot to Whitney because Gilbert had moved to Missouri in 1831. Legal ownership of the lot, however, continued jointly between Whitney and Gilbert until Gilbert’s death in Missouri on June 29, 1834. When Gilbert’s estate was settled, Newel K. Whitney, who was then living in Illinois, gave his brother Samuel F. Whitney, a Kirtland resident, power of attorney on August 29, 1839, to buy Gilbert’s undivided half interest in the property from Gilbert’s widow, Elizabeth. Samuel F. Whitney purchased the lot from Elizabeth Gilbert at a public auction, and on December 26, 1839, Newel acquired the lot from his brother. “Power of Attorney” and “Proclamation,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections; Lake County Deed Record, A: 574–75.

196. D&C 104:39. The ashery lot was located about a rod (16.5 feet) southeast of the lot owned jointly by Whitney and Gilbert and next to Stoney Brook, which emptied northward into the Chagrin River. Whitney had bought this lot of .65 acres from Peter French on September 5, 1822, for \$26. Geauga County Deed Record, 8:427–28. On that same day, Whitney had also leased water rights from French for a spring south of the property, apparently for use at the ashery. Two years later, Whitney had enlarged the lot by buying an adjacent .15 acres south and nearer to the spring. Geauga County Deed Record, 8:429; 14:386; “List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney Augt 1837,” Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections. Whitney had started his ashery enterprise by January 1824 and expanded it in 1828 when he constructed a frame building and a small attached office. “Notice,” *Painesville Telegraph* (January 14, 1824); Staker, “Thou Art the Man,” 85–88.

197. D&C 104:40; D&C 94:1.

198. D&C 104:41. The phrase “this whole mercantile establishment” refers to the “N. K. Whitney and Company,” including the Whitney store and properties associated with it.

And again let my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] have appointed unto him the lot which is laid off for the building of my houses,¹⁹⁹ which is forty rods long and [p. 29] twelve wide,²⁰⁰ & also the farm²⁰¹ upon which his father now resides;²⁰² & this is the beginning of the

199. D&C 104:43. “Houses” changed to “house” in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:8). At the time this revelation was given, the Church planned to construct three sizable “houses” (temples or Church buildings) on a large temple lot. See D&C 88:119; 94:1–4, 10–11. The word “houses” was retained by Orson Hyde in Kirtland Revelation Book, 104; see n. 200 below.

200. D&C 104:43. “Forty rods long and twelve [rods] wide” (660' x 198') are the correct dimensions of the combined temple lot taken partly from the French and Williams farms. This temple lot was represented as the rectangle of the east third of the center block on both the 1833 plat map and the county-filed 1837 plat map. Information on the 1837 plat map and the deeds of the two smaller lots confirm these dimensions. Geauga County Deed Record, 18:477–79; 24:99.

The deeds of the two lots as issued in 1834, however, proved to be illegal. The problem arose from a minor surveyor's error, requiring the lots to be resurveyed and the deeds to be reissued. The new deed for the south lot was dated September 15, 1835, and the deed for the north lot was dated January 4, 1837. Geauga County Deed Record, 21:226; 24:100.

201. D&C 104:43. “Farm” changed to “inheritance” in the 1835 edition (D&C 98:8). The stewardship granted to Joseph Smith Jr. was the Frederick G. Williams farm, which Joseph spoke of as “my farm.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:120. Williams had purchased his farm of 144 acres from Isaac More and then consecrated it to the Church on January 5, 1832. Joseph acquired title to the Williams farm, now of 142 44/160 acres, and the Williams temple lot of 1 116/160 acres on May 5, 1834. Geauga County Deed Record, 16:22; 18:480; see ns. 53 and 200 herein.

202. D&C 104:43. Joseph Smith Sr. was residing on the farm of Frederick G. Williams, which Joseph Smith Sr. had helped manage. See n. 49 herein. The exact location of Father Smith's residence on the farm in 1834 is uncertain, but he may have lived with his son William. On December 18, 1835, Joseph Smith noted that his father lived with William in William's “own house.” *History of the Church*, 2:341. The Prophet said, however, that during December his parents moved in with him and Emma. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:111, 123; Anderson, *Lucy's Book*, 587. The next year, on December 11, 1836, Joseph, who held title to the Williams farm, recorded the transfer of a lot from the farm to his brother William in the name of his wife, Caroline Grant. The lot faced west on Smith Street immediately southeast of the south temple lot. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:25. This lot may have been where William and his father resided at the time of the above revelation. See George Edward Anderson, *Church History in Black and White: George*

stewardship which I have appointed unto him, for a blessing upon him & upon his father; for behold, I have reserved an inheritance for his father, for his support;²⁰³ therefore he shall be reckoned in the house of my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.]: & I will multiply blessings upon the house of my servant Joseph [Smith Jr.] inasmuch as he is faithful, even a multiplicity of blessings.

And now a commandment I give unto you concerning Zion, that you shall no longer be [p. 30] bound as a United Firm, to your brethren of Zion, only on this wise: after you are organized, you shall be called, The United Firm of the Stake of Zion, the City of Kirtland, among your selves. And your brethren, after they are organized, shall be called, The United Firm of the City of Zion,²⁰⁴ & they shall be organized in their own names, & in their own name; & they shall do their business in their own name, & in their own names; & you shall do your business in your own name, & in

Edward Anderson's Photographic Mission to Latter-day Saint Historical Sites (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1995), 147, 151; Lyle S. Briggs and Gladys A. Briggs, "Land Transactions of the Saints, Kirtland, Ohio, 1830's and 1840's," unpublished land records and maps, Lot 30, Map 3, Church Archives.

203. D&C 104:45. In May 1831, Joseph Smith Sr. received the farm of Frederick G. Williams to manage for his livelihood. See ns. 48 and 52 herein. On December 18, 1833, he was ordained Patriarch and a member of the Church Presidency by his son Joseph, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams. *The Book of Patriarchal Blessings*, 1834, 9, Church Archives. On September 14, 1835, the "high council of the Presidency" at Kirtland granted a stipend to Patriarch Joseph Smith Sr. when he served as Patriarch. The minutes state, "It is decided . . . President Joseph Smith Senr . . . be paid for his time at the rate of ten dollars per week, and his expenses." *Kirtland Council Minutes*, 107.

204. D&C 104:48. The United Firm, with properties in Ohio and Missouri, was now to be divided into two geographical branches with new names. With the death of storekeeper Sidney Gilbert in Missouri, however, the Missouri branch of the United Firm soon phased out, as did the branch at Kirtland. There are no records of the separate United Firms functioning as such. The business of making financial decisions for the Church shifted to the high councils in Kirtland and in Missouri and later to the Church Presidency. See n. 120 herein; *Kirtland Council Minutes*, 76–80; Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 48 n. 2, 105–8.

your own names.²⁰⁵ And this I have commanded to [p. 31] be done for your salvation, as also for their salvation, in consequence of their being driven out, and that which is to come.²⁰⁶ The covenant being broken through transgression, by covetousness & feigned words,²⁰⁷ therefore, you are dissolved as a United Firm with your brethren, that you are not bound only up to this hour unto them,²⁰⁸ only on this wise, as I said, By loan, as shall be agreed by this Firm in counsel as your circumstances will admit, & the voice of the council direct.²⁰⁹

And again, a commandment I give unto you concerning your Stewardship which I have appo[p. 32]inted unto you, behold, all these properties are mine, or else, your faith is vain, & ye are found hypocrites, & the covenants which you have made unto me are broken, & if these properties are mine, then, ye are stewards, otherwise ye are no stewards.²¹⁰ But, verily, I say unto you, I have appointed unto you to be stewards over mine house, even stewards indeed, & for this purpose have I commanded you to organize yourselves, even to print my word, the fulness of my scriptures, the revelations which I have given unto you, [p. 33] & which I shall hereafter from time to time give unto you, for the purpose of building up my church & kingdom on the earth,²¹¹

205. D&C 104:48–50. The officers were to operate their various properties in their own names, no longer as agents of the United Firm.

206. D&C 104:51. The exiled Latter-day Saints in Missouri suffered losses, unsettled property issues, and an uncertain future.

207. D&C 104:52. See ns. 162 and 163 herein.

208. D&C 104:53. The words “your brethren” refer to the officers of the United Firm in Missouri. A follow-up, uncanonized revelation received on April 28, 1834, declared, “Ye are made free from the Firm of Zion, and the Firm in Zion is made free from the Firm in Kirtland: Thus saith the Lord. Amen.” This is the last revelation that refers to the United Firm. “Kirtland Revelation Book,” 111. This revelation severed the solemn bond by which the two branches of the firm were bound. See D&C 82:11.

209. D&C 104:53. The firm at Kirtland retained the privilege to grant loans to the firm in Missouri, none of which are recorded.

210. D&C 104:56. The officers of the United Firm are reminded that in their individual stewardships, they are still supervising property belonging to God as the Creator. D&C 42:29, 32; 78:13–14; 82:4, 12, 19.

211. D&C 104:58. A general assembly of Church officers from Ohio and Missouri met in Kirtland on August 17, 1835, to accept the revelations

& to prepare my people for the time of my coming which is nigh at hand.²¹² ²¹³(Therefore, a commandment I give unto you that ye shall take the books of Mormon, & also the copy-right, & also the copy-right which shall be secured of the articles & Covenants,²¹⁴ in which covenants, all my commandments,²¹⁵ which it is my will should be printed, shall be printed, as it shall be made known unto you; & also the [p. 34] copy-right to the new translation of the scriptures;²¹⁶ & this I say that others may not take the blessings away from you which I have conferred upon you.) And ye

here spoken of and being published in the Doctrine and Covenants. Kirtland Council Minutes, 98–106; *History of the Church*, 2:243–51.

212. D&C 104:59. A popular belief in the Church was that the end of the world was near. See D&C 1:4, 12–13; 33:17; 34:7, 11–12; 46:64–69; 87:6. In Independence in 1832, Phelps suggested the end could be as early as “NINE years.” *Evening and Morning Star* 1, August, 1832, 6. In an 1834 letter to his family in Ohio, Edward Partridge suggested that if the signs of the end come “within the space of one, two, three or five years remember when you see them that I have forewarned you.” “Honored Father and Mother Beloved brothers and sister,” unpublished letter, October 22, 1834, 8, Partridge Papers, Church Archives. For statements from Joseph Smith, see *History of the Church*, 1:315–16; 2:182, 324. For a broader treatment of early Mormon millenarianism, see Glen M. Leonard, “Early Saints and the Millennium,” *Ensign* 9 (August 1979): 43–47, and Grant Underwood, *The Millenarian World of Early Mormonism* (Chicago: University of Illinois, 1993).

213. D&C 104, between verses 59 and 60. The sentence contained in parentheses was not printed in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants or any other printed edition. In the manuscript, the parentheses marks were of a darker shade than the appearance of the other text and may have been added later. See Book of Commandments Law and Covenants, Book C, 34–35. The sentence is included in the Kirtland Revelation Book, 105.

214. “Articles and Covenants” refers to the Doctrine and Covenants. The revelation directed the Church to acquire proper copyright protection for its sacred books.

215. “Commandments” refers to the revelations.

216. Joseph Smith’s revision of the Bible is identified here as the “new translation.” See *History of the Church*, 1:341, 365, 369. On June 15, 1835, Joseph Smith wrote, “We are now commencing to prepare and print the New Translation, together with all the revelations which God has been pleased to give us in these last days.” Jessee, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 363. While the printing of the “New Translation” was intended, lack of funds prevented it. For a treatment on the subject, see Robert J.

shall prepare for yourselves a place for a Treasury,²¹⁷ & consecrate it unto my name & ye shall appoint one among you to keep the treasury²¹⁸ & he shall be ordained unto this blessing; & there shall be a seal upon the Treasury, & all these sacred things²¹⁹ shall be delivered into the Treasury, & no man among you shall call it his own or any part of it; for it shall belong to you all with [p. 35] one accord,²²⁰ & I give it unto you from this very hour; & now see to it, that ye go to & make use of the stewardship which I have appointed unto you, exclusive of these sacred things,²²¹ for the purpose of printing these sacred things, according as I have said; & the avails²²² of these sacred things shall be had in the Treasury, & a seal shall be upon it, & it shall not be used or taken out of the Treasury by any one, neither shall the seal be lo<0>sed which shall be placed upon it only by the voice of the Firm, or by commandment. And thus shall ye preserve [p. 36] all the avails of these sacred things in the Treasury, for sacred & holy purposes, & this shall be called, The Sacred Treasury of the Lord,²²³ & a seal

Matthews, *"A Plainer Translation": Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible* (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975).

217. D&C 104:60. There were to be two financial accounts or treasuries managed by unnamed treasurers. The first, a "sacred treasury," was to contain funds to finance the printing of scriptures. The second or "another treasury" was a revolving account to contain working funds deposited by the firm's Kirtland officers to be drawn upon by them as needed.

218. D&C 104:60. The keeper of this treasury, later called the "sacred treasury," is not named in Church records.

219. D&C 104:62. Sometimes "sacred things" referred to the printed revelations, sometimes to the proceeds from the sale of them, as here.

220. D&C 104:62. The "sacred treasury" would belong to those who worked on the preparation and publication of the scriptures. This included Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, and Oliver Cowdery. Kirtland Council Minutes, 24, 76.

221. D&C 104:63. The stewards were told not to expect to draw from the sacred treasury.

222. D&C 104:64. "Avails" refers to the profits or proceeds from the sale of the Doctrine and Covenants. See Kirtland Council Minutes, 76; D&C 70:1–3.

223. D&C 104:64–66. The sacred treasury, which was to contain the proceeds, profits, or "avails" from the sale of the scriptures, was to be disbursed by the "voice of the Firm" or by revelation. As the Church's

shall be kept upon it, that it may be holy & consecrated unto the Lord. And again, there shall be another Treasury²²⁴ prepared & a Treasurer²²⁵ appointed to keep the Treasury & a seal shall be placed upon it, & all monies that you receive in your stewardships by improving upon the properties which I have appointed unto you, in houses, or in lands, [p. 37] or in cattle, & in all things save it be the holy & sacred writings, which I have reserved unto myself for holy and sacred purposes, shall be cast into the Treasury as fast as you receive monies, by hundreds, or by fifties, or by twenties, or by tens, or by fives, or in other words, if any man among you, obtain five dollars, let him cast it into the Treasury, or if he obtain ten, or twenty, or fifty or a hundred, let him do likewise; & let not any man among you say that it is his own; for it shall not be called his, nor any part of it, & there [p. 38] shall not any part of it be used, or taken out of the Treasury only by the voice & common consent of the Firm.

And this shall be the voice & common consent of the Firm that any man among you, say unto the Treasurer, I have need of this to

financial policy was developing, the distribution of the funds that fit the description of the sacred treasury was immediately directed instead by the presidency of the high council at Kirtland, which also was the Presidency of the Church. Kirtland Council Minutes, 76; *History of the Church*, 2:165. In this a protocol on handling Church funds by the Presidency was developing. In 1838 when the tithing of personal income was revealed as a “standing law . . . forever,” the revelation gave jurisdiction for its disbursal to the “First Presidency of my Church.” D&C 119:4; 120.

224. D&C 104:67. This second or “another” treasury was to serve as a general account to which the stewards operating their individual stewardships could make deposits or from which they could make withdrawals.

225. D&C 104:67. Neither of the two treasurers was otherwise named in Church records. However, Bishop Newel K. Whitney had been previously appointed to “receive the funds of the church” and probably was the most financially experienced and reliable among the members to continue to do so. D&C 72:8–10. Also, an unpublished revelation given in 1832 instructed the two bishops of the Church “to administer the benefits of the church or the overpluss of all who are in their stewardships according to the Commandments.” “Duty of Bishops,” March 1832, Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections. The bishop and his council were appointed by revelation in 1838 to participate with the First Presidency in disposing of the Church tithing funds. D&C 120.

help me in my stewardship, if it be five dollars, or if it be ten dollars, or twenty, or fifty, or a hundred. The treasurer shall give unto him the sum which he requires, to help him in his stewardship, until he be found a transgressor, & it is manifest before the counsel of the Firm, [p. 39] plainly that he is an unfaithful & an unwise steward; but so long as he <is> in full fellowship & is faithful & wise in his stewardship, this shall be his token unto the Treasurer, that the Treasurer shall not withhold; but in case of transgression the Treasurer shall be subject unto the counsel & voice of the Firm, & in case the Treasurer is found an unfaithful & an unwise steward, he shall be subject to the counsel & voice of the Firm, & shall be removed out of his place & another shall be appointed in his stead. And again, verily I say unto you concerning [p. 40] your debts, behold, it is my will that you should pay all your debts; & it is my will that you should humble yourselves before me, & obtain this blessing by your diligence, & humility & the prayer of faith; & inasmuch as you are diligent & humble, & exercise the prayer of faith, behold, I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, until I shall send means unto you for your deliverance. Therefore, write speedily unto New York,²²⁶ & write according to that which shall be dictated by my Spirit, & I will soften the hearts of those to whom you are in debt, that [p. 41] it shall be taken away out of their minds to bring affliction upon you. And inasmuch as ye are humble & faithful & call upon my name, behold, I will give you the victory; I give unto you a promise, that you shall be delivered this once, out of your bondage.²²⁷ Inasmuch as you obtain a chance to loan²²⁸ money by hundreds, or by thousands, even until you shall loan enough to deliver yourselves from bondage,²²⁹ it is

226. D&C 104:81. The officers of the United Firm had accumulated considerable debt, some of it to New York suppliers. Whitney later referred to one of their creditors in Buffalo, New York, who sent a company representative in 1836 to Kirtland to settle debts with Joseph Smith and others. "Dear Brother," October 2 [1841], Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

227. D&C 104:83.

228. D&C 104:84. To borrow.

229. D&C 104:84. To pay off old debts by borrowing from new lenders, Church leaders appear to have received only moderate immediate help. On the day of this revelation, Joseph Smith and five other members

your privilege, & pledge the properties which I have put into your hands this once by giving your names by common consent, or otherwise as it shall [p. 42] seem good unto you, I give unto you the privilege this once, & behold, if you proceed to do the things which I have laid before you, according to my commandment, all these things are mine, & ye are my Stewards, & the Master will not suffer his house to be broken up;²³⁰ even so, Amen.”

of the firm—Rigdon, Williams, Whitney, Johnson, and Cowdery—prayed for financial relief. They also sent Zebedee Coltrin to collect funds from Jacob Myers, who had been dispatched to “borrow for us,” said the Prophet. Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:32–33; *History of the Church*, 2:54. However, no report was given. But on November 29, 1834, some Saints from Essex County, New York, on their way to Missouri with money to buy land arrived at Kirtland. The Prophet expressed appreciation “for the relief which the Lord had lately sent us by opening the hearts of certain brethren from the east to loan us \$430.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:34; Kirtland Council Minutes, 77–80.

230. D&C 104:86. On November 3, 1834, the Prophet noted in his journal, “While reflecting upon the goodness and mercy of the Lord, this evening, a prophecy was put into our hearts, that in a short time the Lord would arrange his providences in a merciful manner and send us assistance to deliver us from debt and bondage.” Jessee, *Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2:35. Two months later, John Tanner, a member from New York, arrived at Kirtland and provided Joseph Smith with a loan of \$2,000. Tanner’s own report was that the brethren had prayed for someone “to lift the mortgage on the farm upon which the temple was being built.” Of the event, Tanner, writing in third person, said, “The day after his arrival in Kirtland, by invitation from the prophet, he [John Tanner] and his son, Sidney, met with the High Council, and were informed that the mortgage of the before mentioned farm was about to be foreclosed. Whereupon he loaned the prophet two thousand dollars and took his note on interest, with which amount the farm was redeemed.” John Tanner, “Sketch of an Elder’s Life,” in *Scraps of Biography* (Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1883), 12; Kirtland Council Minutes, 83.

The Use of Substitute Words in the Published Revelation

In preparing the revelations about the United Firm for publication in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants, the Prophet was concerned about protecting members of the firm. Undoubtedly, hostility against the Latter-day Saints in Ohio motivated Church leaders to protect these revelations from unnecessary scrutiny by a sometimes unfriendly public and peering creditors. At first, the leaders considered not publishing the revelations about the firm because of their sensitive content. Because of the Saints' great interest in them for their spiritual value, however, the leaders decided to publish them, but only after inserting imaginative code words in place of select words pertaining to the firm. They made fifty-four changes to the names of officers, business properties, and places in the April 1834 revelation, with perhaps the most significant change being the pseudonym "Order" for the word "Firm." Additionally, they placed substitute words regarding the United Firm in four other revelations.²³¹

After the Doctrine and Covenants was published in Kirtland in 1835, different views on the meaning of the substitute words soon circulated. William S. West, a traveler from Trumbull County, who visited Kirtland two years after the Doctrine and Covenants was printed, said that reading the pseudonyms afforded him "much amusement." This prompted him to inquire of several Latter-day Saints as to whom the pseudonyms represented. Some answered him that the names were "those of persons and places" from the day of biblical Enoch, but others told him that they were names of "certain persons that lived in Kirtland, and acknowledged that Pelagoram was Sidney Rigdon."²³² This mixed interpretation of the revelation may have been prevalent among members of the Church.

231. The four other sections with code names are D&C 78:4, 8; 82:11, 20; 92:1–2; and 96:2, 4, 6, 8 (these sections appear in the 1835 edition as 75:1–2, 86:4–5; 93:1–2; 96:1–2); compare Kirtland Revelation Book, 15–17; 55; 60–61 (no section 82). None of the revelations in the two major manuscript collections contains the code names except D&C 96, which had the original names marked out and code names written above them. Kirtland Revelation Book, 60–61.

232. William S. West, "A Few Interesting Facts, Respecting the Rise, Progress, and Pretensions of the Mormons," (n.p., 1837), 13. West wrote that "Some [Latter-day Saints] said it was a revelation given to Enoch, the third from Adam, concerning the order of the church that was established in his day. . . ." This illustrates the lack of understanding of the revelation by some early Saints. In his pamphlet, West published a list of thirteen code names and their meanings. Thanks to Dr. Mark Staker for leading me to this source. For a complete list of the twenty-five pseudonyms in the revelations, see David J. Whittaker, "Substituted Names in the Published Revelations of Joseph Smith," *BYU Studies* 23, no. 1 (1983): 111.

Years later, Orson Pratt believed the need for the pseudonyms had passed. To encourage their removal, he explained the reason the words had been used. In a letter to Brigham Young in 1852, he wrote that “fictitious names” were put in the revelations so that “their creditors in Cainhannoch (New York) should not take advantage of this Church firm.”²³³ Then, two years later, while again reflecting upon their early decision to encrypt the revelations, Pratt wrote:

When at length the time arrived to print the manuscripts, it was thought best not to publish them all, on account of our enemies, who were seeking every means to destroy the Prophet and the Church. On account, however, of the great anxiety of the church to see them in print, it was concluded, through the suggestions of the Spirit, that by altering the *real* names given in the manuscripts, and substituting fictitious ones in their stead, they might thus safely appear in print without endangering the welfare of the individuals whose real names were contained therein.²³⁴

In 1873, in his continuing effort to have the substitute words removed from the Doctrine and Covenants, Pratt taught, “The word Enoch did not exist in the original copy; neither did some other names. The names that were incorporated when it was printed, did not exist there when the manuscript revelations were given, for I saw them myself. Some of them I copied,” he said. “Joseph was called Baurak Ale . . . [and] Gazelum. . . . He was also called Enoch.”²³⁵ The substitute names, however, remained in the Doctrine and Covenants without clarification until the 1876 edition when Pratt, now Church Historian, added the original words in brackets next to the pseudonyms, as far as he knew them. In the 1981 edition, all original names were restored, and the code names eliminated²³⁶ except the words “order” or “United Order,”²³⁷ which still have not been replaced by their

233. Orson Pratt to Brigham Young, November 20, 1852, cited in Whittaker, “Substituted Names,” 106. In his letter, Pratt used the code word for New York. See D&C 104:81 (1835 ed., D&C 98:13).

234. Orson Pratt, *The Seer* 2 (March 1854), 228. Italics in the original.

235. Orson Pratt, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 16:156, August 16, 1873.

236. It took until the 1984 printing of the 1981 edition to complete the changes. See Whittaker, “Substituted Names,” 103–112; Robert J. Matthews, “The New Publications of the Standard Words—1979, 1981,” *BYU Studies* 22, no. 4 (1982): 406–8.

237. The retention of the words “order” or “United Order” in the current Doctrine and Covenants is as follows: D&C 78:4, 8 (2 times); 82:20 (2 times); 92:1–2 (2 times); 104:1, 5, 10, 19, 21, 36, 40, 47–48, 53, 64, 71, 72, 74, 76–77 (22 times). While there is no extant copy of D&C 82 prior to the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, that revelation would originally have used the word “firm,” not the later pseudonym “order,” as substituted in the 1835 edition. Brief evidence for this

original words “firm” or “United Firm.” Technically, it is an anachronism for writers to use the terms “order,” “United Order,” or “Order of Enoch” to represent Joseph Smith’s business affairs before 1835, the year these substitute words were placed in the Doctrine and Covenants. And to use them indiscriminately afterwards may distort the Prophet’s history.²³⁸ In preparing the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, Joseph and other editors also changed the headings to the revelations about the United Firm. The heading for the April 1834 revelation in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants reads, “Revelation given to Enoch, concerning the order of the church for the benefit of the poor.”²³⁹ “Enoch,” in this case, was of course a pseudonym for Joseph Smith, confusing some who read it.²⁴⁰

After the United Firm

After the termination of the United Firm, Joseph Smith and other Church leaders still intended to fulfill their dream of building the city at Kirtland. Joseph, who had received the title to Williams’s farm in 1834, transferred it in 1837 to William Marks, a recent arrival in Kirtland, and authorized him to sell building lots on the blocks south of the temple.²⁴¹ That same year, Joseph Smith and others filed a proposal with Geauga County for a larger two-mile square Kirtland city plat.²⁴² But the building lots on the Williams farm as set out on the Kirtland plat maps were never fully developed, nor were the two additional “houses” of the Lord ever constructed on the Williams side of the temple lot. Moreover, Marks bought the north temple lot from Joseph Smith and, on July 11, 1837,

is found in the minutes of the firm at Independence, April 27, 1832. The minutes said, “Resolved, that the name of *the Firm mentioned in the Commandments* [D&C 78 and 82, read] yesterday be Gilbert, Whitney & Company in Zion.” Cannon and Cook, *Far West Record*, 45; italics added.

238. Because the original words “firm” or “United Firm” have not been restored to the revelations in place of “united order,” some may mistakenly assume that the firm was a “religio-socio-economic law instead of a business partnership,” as Cook states. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration*, 66.

239. For the early manuscript headings on the revelation, see p. 39 herein; Kirtland Revelation Book, 100.

240. See n. 235 herein. The heading for D&C 78 in the Kirtland Revelation Book simply reads, “Kirtland March 1—1832.” Kirtland Revelation Book, 15.

241. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:537. In 1841, Joseph Smith acquired the Williams farm and again became its “sole trustee.” Lake County Deed Record, A 505. Marks transferred the full 144 acres, which included the former south temple lot, to Joseph Smith for \$1.

242. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:99.

mortgaged the temple to three New York City merchants.²⁴³ But John Johnson and Newel K. Whitney continued to sell lots on the French farm near the temple. Johnson, who now had title to the farm, sold the farm's remaining eighty acres on May 29, 1837, to his son John Jr.²⁴⁴ While details of the actual mortgage payments on the French farm by the United Firm or its agent, the N. K. Whitney and Company, are unknown, the original agreement between Joseph Coe for the Church and Peter French in 1833 was still in force. A final payment was eventually made to French under that contract, and the note was cancelled in 1848 as paid "in full."²⁴⁵

A year after the Kirtland literary firm was established, Williams and Cowdery, with the help of Phelps and Whitmer, began publishing important imprints. In 1835, besides printing the *Messenger and Advocate* and the *Doctrine and Covenants*, they also printed *A Collection of Sacred Hymns, for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*²⁴⁶ and the *Northern Times*, a short-lived political newspaper.²⁴⁷ In June 1836, shortly after Phelps and Whitmer left their editorial duties in Kirtland and returned to Missouri, Oliver Cowdery bought out Frederick G. Williams, to become the sole editor and proprietor of the Kirtland publishing business, thus ending the existence of F. G. Williams and Company.²⁴⁸

Eventually, with mounting financial and legal problems at Kirtland, Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon left Kirtland for Far West, Missouri, as

243. Joseph Smith sold the north temple lot to William Marks on April 10, 1837. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:536. The mortgaging firm was Mead, Stafford and Company, consisting of Zalmon H. Mead, Jonas Stafford, and Robert W. Mead, with payments due them in 1838, 1839, and 1840. The mortgage covered the temple and .475 acres, two rods (33 feet) from the temple walls. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:211. On February 11, 1841, Marks transferred the north temple lot to Joseph Smith as Trustee-in-Trust. Lake County Deed Record, A 327.

244. Geauga County Deed Record, 24:278. Johnson sold the remaining part of the French farm to his son for \$5,000, the same amount that Joseph Coe contracted for it in 1833.

245. The promissory note dated April 10, 1833, between Peter French and Joseph Coe, contained a notation of payment written across the page: "I have Received my pay in full on this Mortgage[.] I Thereby discharge the same and the notes thereon . . . this 18 day of September 1848. Peter French." Geauga County Deed Record, 17:38–39.

246. D&C 25:11–12.

247. *History of the Church*, 1:450–51. Max H Parkin, "Mormon Political Involvement in Ohio," *BYU Studies* 9, no. 4 (1969): 488–97; Crawley, *A Descriptive Biography of the Mormon Church*, 51–52.

248. *Messenger and Advocate* 2, June 1836, 329, 336. On April 2, 1836, Phelps and Whitmer were released as "joint partners in the [literary] firm." Kirtland Council Minutes, 199.

directed by a revelation on the night of January 12, 1838.²⁴⁹ Meanwhile, a local businessman and enemy of the Saints pressed charges against the Church Presidency, forcing the sale of the printing office. Referring to that building, Hepzebah Richards wrote to her brother, Willard, “Last Monday it was sold at auction” into the hands of a Mormon dissenter. The next night, January 16, Hepzebah said she was awakened “at one o’clock,” to see the burning of the printing office. “In one hour it was consumed and all its contents,” she lamented.²⁵⁰ Benjamin F. Johnson, while reporting that the dissenters against Joseph Smith had taken control of both the temple and the printing house, said that Lyman R. Sherman, a high councilman, set fire to the printing house to prevent their enemies from using it to fight against the Church.²⁵¹

After the United Firm was dissolved in 1834, the leaders in Kirtland continued vigorously in economic endeavors. They organized three new stores in Kirtland, adding more merchandise purchased in New York and more debt,²⁵² organized a banking company in 1836 that later failed,²⁵³ and sold town lots that sometimes followed a national trend of inflated prices.²⁵⁴ These conditions, coupled with other local problems and a national financial panic in 1837, caused Kirtland’s economy to fail, which induced a failure of faith among many of the Saints.²⁵⁵ Some members

249. Unpublished revelation received on January 12, 1838, “Scriptory Book,” 53, Church Archives. Joseph Smith appointed Oliver Granger as his financial agent in Kirtland to handle his debt and other unfinished business. D&C 117:12–15.

250. Parkin, *Conflict at Kirtland*, 254–56; *Journal History*, January 18, 1838.

251. Johnson, *My Life’s Review*, 29–30; see Lyndon W. Cook, “Lyman Sherman—Man of God, Would-be Apostle,” *BYU Studies* 19, no. 1 (1978): 123–24.

252. These stores were: Joseph Smith’s Variety Store, located on Chillicothe Road across the street from the temple; Reynolds Cahoon, Jared Carter and Co., operated by the temple committee to raise funds for its construction, located just northwest of the N. K. Whitney and Company store; and the Boynton and Johnson store, owned by John F. Boynton and Lyman E. Johnson, located near Joseph’s Variety store. Mark L. Staker, “N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland, Ohio,” unpublished typescript, Museum of Church History and Art, 35.

253. For information on the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company, see Marvin S. Hill, C. Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, “The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics,” *BYU Studies* 17, no. 4 (1977): 391–472.

254. For one perspective on Kirtland land sales and its accompanying economics, see R. Kent Fielding, *Utah Historical Quarterly* 4 (October 1959): 331–55; Robert Kent Fielding, “The Growth of the Mormon Church in Kirtland, Ohio” (PhD diss., Indiana University, 1957), 207–83.

255. For consideration of a wider cause of the failure of faith in 1837, see Marvin S. Hill, “Cultural Crisis in the Mormon Kingdom: A Reconsideration of

withdrew from the Church, and several leaders in Missouri and Ohio became dissenters or were sympathetic to them, including some former members of the United Firm. Frederick G. Williams, William W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery, John Johnson, Martin Harris, and John Whitmer all left the Church. Later, however, Frederick G. Williams followed the Saints to Illinois and was restored to fellowship in April 1840, dying in full faith at Quincy in 1842.²⁵⁶ Bishop Partridge died at Nauvoo as a faithful member just a month after Williams returned to the Church, and Phelps returned to the faith two months later. Years passed before Cowdery and Harris returned.²⁵⁷

Ever since young shopkeeper Newel K. Whitney had built a log store northeast of Kirtland and his first frame store at the crossroads on the flats of the Chagrin River, he had prospered. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, his wife, said, “He had thrift and energy, and he accumulated property faster than most of his companions and associates.”²⁵⁸ Arguably the most prosperous of the Saints in Kirtland, Whitney was the one ordained as bishop to help exalt the poor and humble the rich; but he had his own share of troubles, either with the Saints or with the elements.²⁵⁹ After a severe fire at his ashery in 1835—an economic disaster for the Church—Whitney sold what was left of that company to Jacob Bump on February 11, 1837, who two months later sold it to Jonathan Holmes.²⁶⁰

the Causes of Kirtland Dissent,” *Church History* 44 (September 1980): 286–97; Backman, *The Heavens Resound*, 310–41.

256. Frederick G. Williams, “Frederick Granger Williams of the First Presidency of the Church,” *BYU Studies* 12, no. 3 (1972): 258–59.

257. Oliver Cowdery was rebaptized in 1848, and Martin Harris moved to Utah and was rebaptized in 1870. Richard Lloyd Anderson, “Oliver Cowdery,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, ed. Daniel H. Ludlow, 4 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 1:339; Rhett Stephens James, “Martin Harris,” *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* 2:576.

258. Elizabeth Ann Whitney, “A Leaf from an Autobiography,” *Woman’s Exponent* 7 (August 15, 1878): 41.

259. In a blessing, the Prophet told Whitney that he would overcome “the narrow-mindedness of his heart, and all his covetous desires that so beset him.” Blessing dated September 14, 1835, “The Book of Patriarchal Blessings, 1834,” 33, Church Archives.

260. Geauga County Deed Record, 23:446; 25:4. Site historian and anthropologist Dr. Mark L. Staker, while on several digs on the Kirtland ashery site in 2000 and 2001, found evidence of several fires probably caused by the kiln of the sawmill adjacent to the ashery. Staker, “N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland,” 42, 59. Further, the ashery tax assessment for 1834 was \$310. It dropped the next year to \$77, suggesting a severe fire in 1835. Geauga County Tax Record, [1834] 507:27; [1835] 508:19. In his “List of Property Owned by N. K. Whitney Augt 1837,” Whitney records “entrails of ashery lot” for his ashery business. Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.



FIG. 10. The N. K. Whitney and Company store, ca. 1910. Newel K. Whitney purchased the lot for his store in 1826 and constructed the building soon afterwards. In 1832, N. K. Whitney and Company became the mainstay of the United Firm at Kirtland and the holding company of the Peter French farm and other properties of the firm. LDS Church Archives © Intellectual Reserve, Inc.

Though troubled by the late economic failures at Kirtland and the disaffection of his brethren, Newel K. Whitney moved to Far West, Missouri, and then to Nauvoo. After Joseph Smith's death, he took his family to Utah. He died in Salt Lake City, September 25, 1850, as the Presiding Bishop of the Church. Meanwhile, he had left his properties in Kirtland in the hands of his brother Samuel F. Whitney, who never joined the Church and was resentful against his brother's role in it.²⁶¹ In 1857, Samuel, still Newel's creditor, was appointed executor of his estate. At his death, Newel still owned the Whitney store building, his two houses next door, and a few other minor properties at Kirtland, all of which his brother sold to pay Newel's debts, including over \$1,000 he owed Samuel.²⁶² When Newel

261. In a blessing given to Whitney, Joseph Smith Sr. said of Newel's brother Samuel, "Thou hast an ungodly brother who knows not the Lord, neither does he understand His ways." Orson F. Whitney, "The Aaronic Priesthood," *Contributor* 6 (January 1885): 128.

262. In his "List of Properties Owned by N. K. Whitney Augt 1837," Newel appraised the value of the acre lot and his houses to be \$2,500 and his store to be \$1,500, but after the Mormons left Kirtland, values depreciated. Whitney Collection, Perry Special Collections.

died, his property was the cheaply valued remnants of N. K. Whitney and Company, the once vibrant core of the United Firm.²⁶³

By 1870, memory of the United Firm had faded, its meaning and the details of its history obscured by the code name “United Order.” In the West, the Church faced new struggles—sometimes monumental ones. One of these was the Saints’ economic survival after the arrival of the transcontinental railroad, the abundant appearance of non-Mormon marketers, and the increased threat of non-Mormon mining. To answer this collective menace, Brigham Young established a flurry of pioneer cooperative enterprises: manufacturing, agricultural associations, banking, and merchandising, buttressed by the newly established Zion’s Co-operative Mercantile Institution with branches in a hundred Utah communities.²⁶⁴ But their success was threatened by the impact of the economic panic of 1873. In response, one year later, Brigham Young, while in St. George, Utah, established a creative and unique branch to his already remarkable cooperative movement. In organizing the new enterprise, which took several socioeconomic forms, Brigham borrowed for it the name “United Order,” linking the new endeavor by name to the past. Some of these united orders featured communal ownership and thus were markedly different from the United Firm. As President Young’s movement spread to 150 Mormon settlements, it gave a new life to the old pseudonym, and during the approximate decade of its existence, its legacy tended to obscure or color the facts about Joseph Smith’s United Firm.²⁶⁵ Nevertheless, by prudently preserving much of its historical record, the Church has enabled others to reexamine the past and thereby to better reconstruct it.

263. “Newel K. Whitney Estate,” Lake County Probate Court, Final Record 1857, B 93. Shortly before his death, Newel appointed his brother with power of attorney and suggested to him to sell the Whitney store for a modest \$800, but the sale was not made. Staker, “N. K. Whitney and Company in Kirtland,” 43–44.

264. Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830–1900* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1958), 293–320.

265. For a consideration of the United Order in Utah, see Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom*, 323–52; Arrington, Fox, and May, *Building the City of God*, 135–75; Leonard J. Arrington, *Orderville, Utah: A Pioneer Mormon Experiment in Economic Organization* (Logan: Utah State Agricultural College, 1954); Edward J. Allen, *The Second United Order among the Mormons* (New York City: AMS, 1967); Kathryn St. Clair Fellows, “Brigham City Experiment” (master’s thesis, Clairmont Graduate School, 1967); and James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975): 359–66.

Conclusion

This treatment of the United Firm is intended to elevate readers' awareness of the firm's importance in the early Church. The firm, while applying the principles of consecration and stewardship, was the means by which the infant Church tried to achieve its temporal mission. Thus, the Prophet used its board of managers to help build the Kingdom before the quorums of high-level leadership were developed to assist him in his work. Knowledge about the firm helps furnish the context for much that happened shortly after the Church was organized. This discussion also provides a comprehensive inventory of the properties held by the United Firm in both Ohio and Missouri, while emphasizing certain important properties and clarifying the less-understood ones named in the 1834 revelation. It identifies the later-emerging high councils as fulfilling the assignment given to the two new local United Firms and the bishop and First Presidency as eventually fulfilling by flexible application the assignment given to the treasurer and treasury. It shows that the community plan for Kirtland with its three temples was used as the model for the city of Zion and for the first three temples that were to be constructed in it. In an attempt to help free LDS history from misunderstanding, this review reminds us that the title "Firm" or "United Firm," as used in the manuscripts of the revelations about it, is still missing from the printed scriptural text. Thus, this briefly sponsored but dynamic institution of the early Church should not be minimized in our historical writings. It was prominent in the early 1830s and deserves a legacy of its own. This discussion may also shed light on the aptness of Joseph Smith in his role as business executive and manager, as he served as the firm's leader and principal advocate. Most important, perhaps, it helps to underscore the fact that the prayerful Prophet was heavily occupied by the affairs of the United Firm when he also similarly and simultaneously guided the Church in the other demanding dimensions of its prophetic mission.

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A Survey of Dating and Marriage at BYU

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A 2001 study of 1,000 young women attending four-year colleges and universities across the United States conducted by Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt found that “dating” has all but disappeared from American college campuses. Only half of the women reported they had been asked on six or more dates during their entire college career. In fact, one-third of the women had two or fewer dates during the same four years.¹ Instead of dating, college students now “hang out” in mixed groups in a variety of settings including apartments, dormitory rooms, student centers, pizza parlors, coffee shops, and bars. From these associations young people may pair off and “hook up” with a member of the opposite sex.

In the Glenn and Marquardt study, “hooking up” was defined as “when a girl and a guy get together for a sexual encounter and don’t necessarily expect anything further.” Forty percent of the women in the study had participated in a hookup, and over 90 percent indicated that hooking up is a regular activity on their campus.² The level of physical intimacy involved in a hookup remains ambiguous in student conversations, meaning anything from kissing to sexual intercourse. The ambiguity of the term allows students to tell others that they have hooked up without completely compromising their reputation. Some college students applaud that hanging out and hooking up carry no commitment or responsibility such as exclusivity or the designation of the relationship as girlfriend and boyfriend. The popularity of hanging out and hooking up has influenced many college students to shift their focus from seeking marriage to seeking casual sexual relationships. Phrases like “friends with benefits” and “sex without strings and relationships without rings” are tossed around on campus, and sexual intimacy has evolved into something casual and common.

This startling description of hooking up and the demise of dating on American campuses motivated us to conduct a study among BYU students to ascertain whether these trends have in any way invaded this campus as well. BYU students make a commitment upon enrollment to “live a chaste and virtuous life,” specifically “reserving sexual intimacy for marriage”: “The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and BYU affirm that sexual relationships outside the covenant of marriage are inappropriate.”³ LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley told the student body in 1988:

This university will become increasingly unique among the universities of the nation and the world. We must never lose that uniqueness. We must hold tenaciously to it. Without it there would be no justification whatever for sponsorship by the Church and the use of the tithing funds of the Church to support it.

The honor code to which you subscribe is also related to this. It is designed to insure the presence on this campus of a student body of young men and young women with standards above the cut of the world at large, ideals that are conducive to spiritual relationships and a social atmosphere of respectability.⁴

Interestingly, Leon Kass, a non-LDS researcher, suggested that in light of the disturbing findings about hooking-up activities on college campuses that American parents should steer their children “to religiously affiliated colleges that attract like-minded people.”⁵ According to him, such a choice will assist their children in avoiding involvement in the hooking-up culture. The primary purpose of this study was to ascertain whether BYU’s unique culture, in both social and spiritual aspects as described by President Hinckley, offers the protection hoped for by Kass.

Over the past forty years, young people have been marrying later and later in their lives.⁶ Parents, church leaders, and public policy makers are seriously concerned whether a substantial number of young Americans are merely delaying marriage or have rejected marriage and opted for singleness. The answer to this question has very significant implications for society. Unfortunately, a definitive answer will not be known until today’s youth have become senior citizens. However, some clues about LDS young people are available now in this survey of unmarried BYU students’ attitudes, goals, and intentions concerning marriage.

The BYU Survey

In winter semester 2002, we conducted a mail survey of a random sample of BYU students selected from the student directory. We sent out 1,893 questionnaires; 155 were returned because of incorrect addresses; 176 recipients who replied were dropped from the survey because they were Independent

Study (correspondence) students who tend to be married and older than the typical college student. We obtained completed questionnaires from 1,124 students for a 72 percent response rate. Further screening showed that 784, or 70 percent, from this sample were single students. Only single students age 18 to 30 are reported in this study. We note that 99 percent of our sample of BYU students are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. These data give a fairly reliable picture of dating at BYU.

Our survey was designed to find out BYU students' goals and attitudes about marriage and dating: how important marriage is to them, how confident they are that they will find a mate, and how they go about the process of getting to know people of the opposite sex. We also asked what type of physical intimacy students thought appropriate for hanging-out and dating relationships and what intimate activity they had participated in.

Life Goals and Attitudes about Marriage

One indication of the relative importance of marriage was obtained by identifying how single BYU students ranked marriage in relation to several other important life goals, ranging from finishing college to helping those less fortunate. The highest-ranked goal for BYU students is having a close personal relationship with God, closely followed by marriage in the temple, which combines spiritual and marital goals (table 1). Ninety-seven percent of the BYU women and 93 percent of the BYU men answered that marrying in the temple is a "very important" goal. We compared the attitudes of BYU students to those of a very large national sample of graduating high school seniors (18 years old) interviewed in the spring of 2000 in the Monitoring the Future Project (table 2).⁷ These high school seniors are one to four years younger than typical BYU students but provide a reasonable picture of what young people are generally thinking about marriage. Similar, although not identical, goals were ranked by the high school seniors. Marriage is an important goal to them as well. It seems that most young people in this country desire to marry. Although aspirations for marriage and a happy family life were similar between BYU and the national sample, there is a striking difference concerning religious or spiritual goals.

We asked BYU students several other questions about their perceptions of and attitudes toward marriage (table 3). Ninety-six percent of the BYU students claimed that "being married is a very important goal" to them. We can compare this to the Glenn and Marquardt study mentioned above, in which 83 percent of women agreed ("Strongly agree" or "Somewhat agree") that marriage is a very important goal (table 4). Interestingly, the women in the national study are more optimistic about finding a mate

TABLE 1
BYU Students' Life Goals

How important are the following goals to you? "Very important," "Important," "Somewhat important," and "Not important." The following table lists the percentage of single BYU students who responded "Very important."

Goal	Men (N=327)	Women (N=445)
A close personal relationship with God	93%	98%
Marrying in the temple	93%	97%
Finishing college	93%	85%
Having children	85%	90%
Marrying	87%	88%
Obtaining a job I like	89%	53%
Maintaining health/ fitness	54%	59%
Help people who are less fortunate	48%	51%
Having recreational and leisure activity	45%	38%
Earning considerable money	28%	11%

TABLE 2
American High School Students' Life Goals

Question: How important is each of the following to you in your life? Choose "Extremely important," "Quite important," "Somewhat important," or "Not important." The following table shows the percentage who ranked these items "Extremely important."

Goal	Men (N=996)	Women (N=992)
Having a good marriage and family life	73%	83%
Being able to find steady work	65%	72%
Finding purpose and meaning in my life	53%	70%
Having plenty of time for recreation and hobbies	41%	27%
Having lots of money	34%	20%
Working to correct social and economic inequalities	11%	11%

Source: Jerald G. Bachman, Lloyd D. Johnston, and Patrick M. O'Malley, *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors: 2000* (Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 2001).

when the time is right than are BYU students. Nearly the entire national sample of women, 99 percent, is convinced the right man will appear in their lives at the appropriate time. The BYU women are a little less confident at 92 percent, followed by BYU men at 88 percent. The differences are small but do suggest that BYU students take seriously the task of finding a spouse who meets their high expectations. They are a little less sure that someone with the traits they desire will appear at the right time.

About two-thirds of the women in the national Glenn and Marquardt study and two-thirds of the BYU men in our study desire to meet their future husband or wife at college. We were a little surprised that only 57 percent of the BYU women hope to meet their future husband at college. As we will discuss below, some BYU women plan on finishing their schooling before they marry. For whatever reason, nearly half of the young women at BYU reported not being very concerned about meeting their future spouse while attending BYU.

It is clear that the vast majority of BYU students not only hope to marry but expect to be married within five to ten years. Only 5 percent of the men and 7 percent of the women do not see marriage in their future within that time frame. This is considerably less than the 29 percent of the national sample of women who feel that marriage is more distant than five to ten years in their future.

BYU students are convinced that marriage is a happier way of life than singleness or cohabitation. Approximately 90 percent of the BYU students feel marriage is the more fulfilling lifestyle, as compared to 39 percent of the female high school seniors and 28 percent of the male high school seniors (answering “Agree” or “Mostly agree” in table 5). Clearly marriage, as an important part of the “plan of happiness” taught in the doctrines and scriptures of the LDS Church, influences the hopes of LDS youth and young adults. While BYU students have likely seen family conflict and divorce in their own or their friends’ families, BYU students are not greatly discouraged from seeking marriage. Only 6 percent of those attending BYU indicated they questioned marriage as a way of life, as compared to 28 percent of the high school seniors. This 6 percent, though a relatively low figure, may be cause for concern among Church leaders. The Church gives marriage high priority in happiness here and ultimate exaltation in the hereafter.

Although most studies among college students have discovered to a large degree that students feel marriage is important, have a desire to get married, and are confident that they will eventually do so, these feelings and aspirations are significantly stronger among BYU students.

TABLE 3
BYU Students’ Attitudes about Marriage

Percentage of single BYU students who responded “Strongly agree” or “Agree.”

Attitude	Men (N=327)	Women (N=445)
Being married is a very important goal to me.	96%	97%
I believe that when the time is right, I will find the right person to marry.	88%	92%
I would like to meet my future husband/wife at college.	68%	57%
When I look ahead five or ten years, it is hard to see how marriage fits in with my other plans.	7%	5%
Most people will have fuller and happier lives if they choose legal marriage rather than staying single or just living with someone.	93%	87%
I see so few good or happy marriages that I question it as a way of life.	6%	6%

TABLE 4
American College Women’s Attitudes about Marriage

Being married is a very important goal for me.	I believe that when the time is right, I will find the right person to marry.
Strongly agree 47%	Strongly agree 85%
Somewhat agree 36%	Somewhat agree 14%
Somewhat disagree 12%	
Strongly disagree 6%	
I would like to meet my future husband at college.	When I look ahead five or ten years, it is hard to see how marriage fits in with my other plans.
Strongly agree 19%	Strongly or somewhat agree 29%
Somewhat agree 44%	
Somewhat disagree 24%	
Strongly disagree 12%	

Telephone survey of 1000 women at four-year colleges and universities in the U.S. in winter 2001. Source: Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt, *Hooking Up, Hanging Out, and Hoping for Mr. Right: College Women on Dating and Mating Today* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2001), 42, 73, 74.

TABLE 5

American High School Seniors' Attitudes about Marriage

Question: Most people will have fuller and happier lives if they choose legal marriage rather than staying single, or just living with someone.

	Men	Women
Agree	20%	15%
Mostly agree	19%	13%
Neither	36%	31%
Mostly disagree	11%	13%
Disagree	15%	28%

Question: One sees so few good or happy marriages that one questions it as a way life.

	Men	Women
Agree	11%	12%
Mostly agree	16%	17%
Neither	29%	23%
Mostly disagree	16%	20%
Disagree	27%	29%

Source: Jerald G. Bachman, Lloyd D. Johnston, and Patrick M. O'Malley, *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors: 2000* (Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 2001), 167, 194.

Hanging Out

The hanging-out and hooking-up culture flourishes on college campuses across the country to such an extent that it is now taken for granted. In fact, few researchers bother to collect data on this phenomenon. They simply identify this culture as a way of life among modern college students.⁸ As seen in table 6, hanging out is also very popular among BYU students, just as it is among students elsewhere. One-fourth of the students hang out in mixed groups a remarkable six or more times a week. Hanging-out activities in some form have always been a staple of college social life. What seems to be different with the current generation of college students is that men and women are hanging out together considerably more often as compared to the segregated groups of men and women of generations past.

The most popular hanging-out activity among BYU students appears to be just sitting around a dorm or apartment and talking. Watching television or a video and going to eat are also popular hanging-out activities. Attending ball games, concerts, plays, church meetings, or firesides were occasionally identified as things to do when hanging out.

BYU young women reported they like hanging out because it allows them a more active role in initiating interaction with young men. Both men and women acknowledged that women often get a hanging-out session going, but hanging out is more often initiated by men (table 7). BYU young men reported that they often prefer hanging out to dating because it obviously spares them having to ask for a date and risk rejection. Also, hanging out reduces a man's financial burden, as everyone pays his or her own way. The only major regret BYU students have about hanging out is that they don't do as much of it as they would like. About 40 percent of both the men and women indicated they would like to hang out more often (table 8).

Dating

Dating involves one of the partners, usually the young man, extending an invitation to the other to participate together in a specified activity. Unlike the situation at most American campuses, at BYU dating has not been completely replaced by hanging out. Twenty-three percent of the men and 19 percent of the women claimed five or more dates per month (table 6). Thirty-five percent of the men and 27 percent of the women had at least one date a week. Only seven percent of the young men and 16 percent of the women reported they had not been on a date during the previous

TABLE 6
Frequency of Hanging Out and Dating among BYU Students

Question: How often each WEEK did you hang out with members of the opposite sex last semester?

Hanging out per week	Men (N=324)	Women (N=436)
0	3%	2%
1	15%	18%
2	17%	22%
3	15%	14%
4	13%	12%
5	9%	11%
6 or more	28%	23%
	100%	100%

Question: How often each MONTH did you go on a date last semester?

Dating per month	Men (N = 324)	Women (N=436)
0	7%	16%
1	26%	29%
2	19%	16%
3	13%	11%
4	12%	8%
5	7%	6%
6 or more	16%	13%
	100%	99%

TABLE 7**Initiation of Hanging Out and Dating among BYU Students**

Question: Who initiated any hanging out you participated in last semester?

Hanging Out	Men (N=321)	Women (N=444)
Only men	6%	16%
Mostly men	36%	53%
Men and women equally	47%	30%
Mostly women	11%	1%
Only women	0%	0%
	100%	100%

Question: Who initiated any dates you went on last semester?

Dating	Men (N=321)	Women (N=444)
Only men	27%	26%
Mostly men	44%	36%
Men and women equally	21%	25%
Mostly women	5%	8%
Only women	3%	4%
	100%	99%

month. Many BYU students have as many dates in one month as the senior women in the national study had in nearly four years.

Dating practices at BYU today are not drastically different from previous generations: Men do most of the inviting (table 7). Our survey respondents said dinner and a movie, concert, play, or similar activity is the typical date. Most of the popular activities require the man to pay for dinner and tickets. BYU students listed less expensive dates as well: watching a video, playing cards or board games, attending church activities, hiking, and going for a drive. What has changed is that a substantial number of BYU women have issued a date invitation, and hanging out takes the place of some of the dating. But hanging out has not replaced dating as it has at other universities.

Compared to men, BYU women are less happy with the frequency of their dating (table 8). A few BYU women say they have an active and satisfying dating life, while the others voiced a desire for more. Over half of

TABLE 8**Satisfaction with Frequency of Hanging Out and Dating among BYU Students**

Question: How do you feel about the frequency of your hanging out with members of the opposite sex last semester?

Hanging Out	Men (N=325)	Women (N=441)
Too often	5%	3%
About right	59%	57%
Not often enough	25%	31%
Not nearly often enough	11%	9%
	100%	100%

Question: How do you feel about the frequency of your dating last semester?

Dating	Men (N=325)	Women (N=441)
Too often	4%	3%
About right	45%	34%
Not often enough	35%	36%
Not nearly often enough	16%	27%
	100%	100%

the women feel they do not date often enough. The men, who have greater control over dating, are somewhat more content with their dating life. But a majority of the men, 51 percent, also feel they don't date often enough. When asked why they did not date more, BYU men identified the fear of rejection, financial constraints, and study demands as limiting factors.

Physical Intimacy

As discussed earlier, hanging out on American campuses today is linked to hooking up, which usually involves some degree of physical intimacy. According to a study conducted in 1995 by the Centers for Disease Control, 68 percent of college students in the U.S. had had sexual intercourse during the 3 months previous to the survey.⁹ Among college senior women in Glenn and Marquardt's 2001 national study, 31 percent reported they had never engaged in sex, and of the women who had had sex, 36 percent had not had sexual intercourse during the previous month.¹⁰

To determine the degree of physical intimacy that is part of the dating culture at BYU, we first asked the sample of students what they felt was acceptable and then what activities they had been involved in. BYU students, not surprisingly, are quite conservative in their acceptance of physical intimacy in hanging-out or dating relationships. It is clear from the responses in table 9 that they define hanging out as largely platonic: around 70 percent feel that holding hands, hugging, and kissing are inappropriate in a hanging-out relationship. A small percentage of students, 1 to 3 percent, see that “making out and intense kissing” is acceptable in a hanging-out relationship. Such activity at BYU is commonly known as a NCMO (“nik-mo”), a “noncommittal make out,” and may be the BYU equivalent of the casual sexual behavior found on other American campuses. Finally, BYU students overwhelmingly feel that premarital sexual intimacy is unacceptable. Given the Latter-day Saint doctrine and

TABLE 9
Intimacy during Hanging Out and Dating among BYU Students

Question: What role does physical intimacy, such as holding hands, kissing, making out, petting, and sexual behavior play in hanging out and dating? The following table lists the percentage of single BYU Students who said “Appropriate” or “Very appropriate.”

Attitudes about Intimacy	Hanging Out		Dating	
	Men (N=326)	Women (N=445)	Men (N=326)	Women (N=445)
Holding hands, hugging, and kissing	30%	28%	98%	99%
Making out and intense kissing	3%	1%	44%	37%
Petting	1%	1%	4%	3%
Sexual behavior	1%	0%	2%	1%

Question: At college which of these activities have you participated in while hanging out/ while dating? The following table displays the percentage of single BYU students who said they have done the listed activities.

Participation in Intimacy	Hanging Out		Dating	
	Men (N=326)	Women (N=445)	Men (N=326)	Women (N=445)
Holding hands, hugging, or kissing	47%	49%	86%	81%
Making out and intense kissing	13%	10%	54%	46%
Petting	3%	2%	12%	12%
Oral sex or intercourse	2%	1%	3%	4%

teachings on moral cleanliness, coupled with the BYU honor code, it is not surprising that casual sexual behavior is not nearly as prevalent at BYU as on other college campuses.

BYU students are almost unanimous in feeling that physical expressions of affection like holding hands, hugging, and good-night kisses are appropriate and acceptable in a dating relationship. About half feel there is nothing wrong with more intense kissing while dating. But even among dating couples, there is near unanimous rejection of serious sexual involvement, mainly petting and intercourse.

Importantly, when it comes to actual behavior, the actions of BYU students closely reflects their ideals (table 9). The levels of holding hands, hugging, and kissing (including intense kissing) among those in a casual, hanging-out relationship are a little higher than we expected, but not much. Only 2 percent of the young men have engaged in oral sex or intercourse while in a hanging-out relationship with a young woman. Only 1 percent of the young women have done so.

Not surprisingly, intimacy is higher among dating couples. But the number who acknowledged having oral sex or intercourse is still remarkably low. Only 3 to 4 percent of single BYU students have had sex, as compared to 60 to 70 percent among their peers at other universities. Even if there is some underreporting among BYU students because of a fear of being reported to the honor code office or feelings of shame, the level is nowhere near the national average. At BYU, personal integrity and religiosity combine with the honor code and a religious environment including religion classes, campus congregations, and devotionals with Church authorities to produce a remarkably low rate of premarital sexual activity.

Shifting from Hanging Out to Dating

Some confusion, conflict, disappointment, and pain have been observed among couples moving from a casual hanging-out relationship to dating.¹¹ One person may define a relationship as intimate and permanent while the other feels that it is strictly a casual association. Insights into how BYU students shift from a hanging-out-just-as-friends relationship to a dating relationship were ascertained from responses to our open-ended question “How does someone try to shift a relationship from hanging out to dating?”¹² The ways and means of shifting hanging out into something more serious are presented in table 10. The confusion noted on other campuses is also present at BYU, and there are no widely accepted ways of saying to one another, “We are now in a dating relationship.”

Not surprisingly, the most frequently mentioned strategy was to spend time together outside the circle of hanging-out friends. One student insightfully made this point: “Relationships are not formed in groups, so separate from the group and spend quality one-on-one time with the person. I think too many students are afraid of the transitional risk—the ‘what will happen if I speak up and ask him or her for a date’—so they remain in the comfortable bubble of hanging out because there is no commitment or failure that way!” Another said that the shift comes when “they ‘ask out’ the other person, thus formally establishing interest.” One young woman got right to the point: “Someone has to say the word ‘date’! This shift in formality sends the other person the message that another dimension of the relationship is desired.”

An increase in physical intimacy is another important signal or sign among BYU students. Contact even as casual as holding hands sends the message a couple has shifted the type and intensity of the relationship. Kissing was cited by a large number as the most obvious sign a relationship has grown serious. For example, one student noted that “some sort of contact like holding hands, cuddling, and kissing” defines the shift. Another described the shift in these words: “My friend turned into my boyfriend by asking me if it would ruin the friendship if he kissed me. He did and I continued to think of him as a friend until a few more kisses. We realized that we were basically dating after we kissed. We hung out together more, talked more, and kissed more.” BYU students are similar in this regard to college women in the national study who reported kissing signaled a dating relationship. Said one woman at Yale, “We didn’t talk about it. We kissed. I guess that . . . at the end it sort of became clear [that we were together], and after that we just started to hang out all the

TABLE 10**How BYU Students Shift from Hanging Out to Dating**

Question: How does someone try to shift a relationship from hanging out to dating? (open ended)

Change	Men (N=476)	Women (N=552)
Spend more one-on-one time	45%	44%
Increase physical intimacy	19%	21%
Talking about creating a dating relationship	18%	20%
Happens naturally over time	6%	5%
I don’t know	5%	4%
When man pays for activities	2%	2%
Other	5%	6%
	100%	100%

time. And at that point I knew that we were dating. And later on, after a couple weeks, like we actually became a couple, as in I would refer to him as my boyfriend.”¹³

Only about 20 percent of the BYU students identified talking to each other as a way to confirm a dating relationship. This low level of using discussion as the definer is somewhat surprising, given that 85 percent of BYU students know about the “defining the relationship” talk, known popularly as a DTR. This type of discussion has different names but seems to be present on most campuses. An illustrative comment from a BYU student is, “Verbally, you have to talk about it so both individuals know that now you are ‘dating,’ so there are not unmet expectations or misunderstanding.” Another student said, “DTRs—Defining the Relationship. In other words you have to tell each other that you are only dating each other and no one else.”

Student comments reveal a general loathing of the dreaded DTR. In spite of the distaste, nearly two-thirds had experienced at least one DTR during the previous semester. A few students, nearly 10 percent, had four or more DTRs during the semester. Young men were a little more likely than women to initiate the “where are we going” talk. It seems that partners in dating relationships are moving at different speeds, and one generally feels the need for clarification before the other does.

Although the hanging-out culture is certainly prevalent at BYU, students here date more and hook up less than their national college-student peers. There is significantly less premarital sex among BYU students due to their strong religious values concerning chastity and their commitment to the honor code. BYU students, however, are like other college students in that they often experience uncertainty about shifting a casual relationship to a more serious one. Fortunately, most realize that one-on-one time, modest physical contact, and heart-to-heart talks are ways to communicate a desire to make the relationship more serious—to consciously move from the “just friends” to the “we are a couple” state.

The Search for a Spouse

Most BYU students reported they hoped to find someone to marry while at the university, so we asked them to identify the traits they were looking for in a spouse. We asked them to rate how important it is that the person they marry has certain traits (table 11).

We were pleasantly surprised that BYU students identified spirituality or religiosity as the most favored trait. Over 90 percent of the women and 87 percent of the men rated religiosity as “very important”

in considering someone for marriage. They want to marry someone who is committed to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and its doctrines, principles, and practices. Most research on characteristics desired in a potential spouse has ignored religiosity. The few studies that have added religious orientation to the list have found college students rate it at or near the bottom.¹⁴ This is another way in which BYU students are dramatically different from most other young adults.

Many studies have noted that both men and women desire pleasant, cooperative, and supportive personalities in those they consider for marriage.¹⁵ Kindness, communicativeness, sense of humor, consideration for others, and empathy are strongly desired. These virtues were extolled by Church leader Jeffrey Holland in counsel to BYU students. “There are many qualities you will want to look

for in a friend or a serious date—to say nothing of a spouse and eternal companion—but surely among the very first and most basic of those qualities will be those of care and sensitivity towards others, a minimum of self-centeredness that allows compassion and courtesy to be evident.”¹⁶ As can be seen in table 11, this holds true for BYU students, although the women rate these traits a little higher than do the men.

Research reported prominently in national news has made much to-do about men’s fixation on physical attractiveness in a potential wife. Such is not the case among BYU students, as only 37 percent of the men admitted that looks were “very important” to them.

TABLE 11

Traits BYU Students Desire in a Spouse

Question: How important are the following characteristics in the person you desire to marry? Remember, no one is perfect, so please don’t mark “very important” in every trait.

Traits Marked “Very Important”	Men (N=327)	Women (N=445)
Spirituality, religious	87%	91%
Communicative, open	77%	78%
Wants children	69%	80%
Kind, considerate, understanding	67%	78%
Fun, sense of humor	59%	61%
Ambitious, hard worker	40%	68%
Educated	32%	59%
Intelligence/Smart	43%	42%
Healthy	35%	26%
Social, outgoing	26%	28%
Physically attractive	37%	9%
From a good family	12%	16%
Athletic	10%	8%
Earning capacity	1%	12%

An examination of these desired traits reveals that BYU students have a pretty good idea of the type of person they wish to marry. Fortunately, the desired traits are those that will most likely foster a fulfilling marriage. The most important traits in the eyes of BYU students are those of spirituality and a kind and open personality, both of which facilitate a strong marital relationship.

False Starts

When students talk freely among themselves, it is common to hear stories of unrequited love and broken hearts or what might be characterized as “false starts.” Exactly half of the BYU students, both men and women, reported they had broken up a romantic relationship during the school year. One-third reported one broken relationship, 12 percent claimed two, and 4 percent of the men and 6 percent of the women reported three or more break-ups.

Not surprisingly, no single reason, event, or circumstance precipitated the demise of most courtships. The reasons these romantic relationships ended in failure are reported in table 12. For about 20 percent of the students, as the couple spent more time together, feelings of attraction declined and the relationship lost its initial excitement. A study of 185 college students reported similar results: 27 percent of them cited being “tired of each other” as a factor in their decision to end a romantic relationship (table 13).¹⁷ One BYU woman’s comment illustrates this process. “We didn’t have very much in common—I fell out of love. I couldn’t imagine marrying him.” A young BYU man explained, “I stopped having feelings for her, so I ended it.” Another young BYU man noted, “I was not in love with her. We dated for ten months—she was in love with me—and I tried to fall in love with her. She is a great person, but I couldn’t fall in love with her.”

Besides just the gradual decline in romantic feelings, about 20 percent of the BYU student relationships fell apart due to serious conflicts as the students got to know each other better. In some cases, one partner became jealous and overly possessive, while in others the relationship became unbalanced, with one partner giving much more than the other. As shown in table 13, the study at a large southeastern university found that 43 percent of students terminated a relationship because of “too many differences/different values.” This number is more than double the percentage at BYU. We suspect that a greater similarity of values and expectations has a positive effect on relationships among BYU students, since virtually all are members of the LDS Church.

TABLE 12

Reasons BYU Students Ended a Relationship

Question: Why did the last relationship end?

Reason	(N=146)
Died out, boring, didn't feel right	19%
Conflicts, possessive partner, unbalanced relationship	19%
Partner had someone else, cheating	11%
Relationship became too physical	9%
Physically separated, mission, moved	9%
Not ready for marriage, too immature	8%
Drifted apart, different goals	7%
Relationship happened too fast	6%
Met someone else, wanted to date others	6%
Other	5%
	100%

TABLE 13

Reasons American College Students Ended a Relationship

(respondents could give more than one reason)

Reason	Percent
Too many differences/different values	43%
Got tired of each other	27%
Cheating	18%
Dishonesty	18%
I met someone new	15%
Separation	15%
My partner met someone new	13%
Parental disapproval	13%
Violence/abuse	9%
Alcohol/drugs	7%
I went back to a previous lover	6%
My partner went back to a previous lover	5%

Survey of 185 undergraduates at a southeastern university. Source: David Knox and others, "Why College Students End Relationships," *College Student Journal* 31, no. 4 (1997): 451.

BYU students reported that they ended unbalanced relationships: “It was all one-sided,” one young woman stated and went on to say, “He wanted to marry me, and I got swept off my feet at first, then I few days later realized I did not even like him, so I ended it.” A young man complained, “She started to get really annoying. We didn’t get along anymore. I found myself caring about her less and less.” Several students noted religion was the source of their conflict. For example, “We ran out of things to talk about; we were just very different—different goals and levels of spiritual commitment.” And one young woman ended a relationship “because he decided to leave the Church and began to question the principles that I believe in.”

About 10 percent wanted out when they discovered their partner was “two-timing” them. Students made it clear that “cheating,” even if it does not involve physical intimacy, is given zero tolerance at BYU. The anger of a young woman is obvious in her comment: “He had a girlfriend I did not know about!! I am not bitter, yeah right!” Another said, “He strung several girls along without any of us knowing and then dumped all of us but one, got engaged in a month, and got married the next.”

Another 10 percent of the students felt they were attracted only physically or became too physically involved; the resultant guilt caused them to flee the relationship and sometimes to resent their partner. One young man noted his mistaking lust for love: “It was all physical. I was deceiving myself about my love for her, which was actually only physical.” A young woman lamented, “I ended it because we were ‘too physical’ without having potential for marriage. We love each other, dated for two years, but it got too physical. We messed up and it ruined us! I’m glad it finally ended.”

Physical separation, immaturity, and moving too quickly without really knowing each other were also mentioned by students as strong reasons for ending a relationship that seemed at one point in time to hold the promise of marriage.

The frequency of false starts and the variety of reasons for failed relationships suggest that finding a marriageable partner is not an easy task and often involves a certain amount of what some view as good luck or serendipity. It is clear that many events, experiences, and circumstances can doom a romantic relationship. Contributing to the difficulty of the task is that both partners must be simultaneously motivated to pursue an enduring relationship. Unfortunately, if one of the partners loses interest, the other is left feeling rejected, hurt, and sometimes angry. In spite of the long litany of things that go wrong in relationships, most BYU students do marry, whether during their undergraduate studies or after. BYU institutional research shows

that 63 percent of male students who graduate are married by graduation time, as are 55 percent of female students.¹⁸

Deciding to Marry

Making a decision to marry a person—which to most BYU students has eternal implications—can be a daunting challenge. Students were asked how they would know when they had found “the one” or “someone” to marry. The responses to this open-ended question revealed both considerable variation and some confusion among students about how to identify someone to marry (table 14). Most frequently mentioned was asking for some type of spiritual confirmation. Twenty-two percent of the answers given by the men and nearly 30 percent by the women reported they focused primarily on spiritual feelings and answers to prayers. Looking to spiritual manifestations makes the BYU mate selection process considerably different from the process by which their national peers make the decision to marry.

Feelings that it is the right thing to do ranked next, followed by feelings of love. Compatibility in personality, goals, and hopes for the future accounted for 9 or 10 percent. Enjoyment of being together, bringing out the best in each other, friendship, open communication, physical attractiveness, and trust were mentioned in 1 to 7 percent of the answers. Interestingly, 7 percent of the young men and 4 percent of the young women admitted they were totally clueless about how they will make a decision whether or not to marry.

TABLE 14

How BYU Students Expect to Decide to Marry

Question: How will you know when you have found a person or “the” person to marry?
(open ended)

Feeling, Event or Circumstance	Men (N=486*)	Women (N=767*)
Spiritual confirmation	22%	29%
Feels right	15%	12%
Feelings of love	10%	10%
Compatible, complement each other	10%	9%
Enjoy spending time together	7%	7%
Brings out best in me	4%	7%
Friendship	3%	5%
Open communication	3%	4%
Physical attraction	3%	1%
Trust, confidence	2%	1%
I don't know	7%	4%
Other	15%	11%
	101%	100%

* Some respondents gave more than one answer

The rate of students’ successful searches for an eternal companion is fairly high at BYU. Thirty-eight percent of the young women and 43 percent of the young men reported they were currently in a relationship with marriage potential. The percentage is somewhat higher for BYU seniors, 48 percent for both men and women. The same proportion of the national sample, 48 percent of senior women, reported they currently had a boyfriend.¹⁹

Hesitation in the Search

Even though BYU students engage in a lot of hanging out and dating, many do not seem to be making much progress toward getting married. These single students identified the factors that were influencing them to avoid marriage (table 15). Some of these students experienced the divorce of their own parents. In addition, marriage is generally portrayed negatively in the media. A study of American young adults not attending college reported the same fear:

Despite doubts and difficulties, young men and women have not given up on the ideal of finding a soul mate to marry. On the contrary, they

TABLE 15
Factors Influencing BYU Students to Delay Marriage

Question: Are any of the following factors influencing you to delay marriage? Choose “Strong,” “Moderate,” “Weak,” or “No influence.” The following table lists the percentage of single BYU students who responded “Strong” or “Moderate” influence.

Factor	Men (N=327)	Women (N=445)
Fear of making a mistake	59%	58%
Need more emotional maturity	44%	59%
No opportunity to marry	33%	56%
Desire to finish school	26%	45%
Fear of responsibility	33%	34%
Fear of responsibility of parenthood	29%	33%
Desire to establish career	29%	22%
Pressure from family not to marry	12%	12%
Pressure from friends not to marry	6%	9%
Unworthy to marry in the temple	9%	5%
Other	25%	11%

are dedicated to the goal of finding a lifelong best friend and kindred spirit. However, their ideals of soul-mate marriage contrast sharply with personal experience—as well as the popular culture’s portrait—of married people. Both media images and real-life models of marriage tend to be more negative than positive. Many in this study have grown up with unhappily married or divorced parents. They know exactly what a bad marriage is, but they are less sure of what a good marriage looks like. Some can only describe a good marriage as “the opposite of my parents.”²⁰

Sixty percent of BYU students indicated “fear of making a mistake” as a primary factor that discourages them in making decisions regarding marriage. Closely associated with this fear of selecting the wrong mate was a fear of the responsibilities of marriage along with a fear of parenthood. About a third of the students identified both these fears as either “strong” or “moderate” influences to delay marriage. Over half of the women and around one-third of the men claimed that they had not yet had a viable opportunity to marry. Surprisingly, more young women than young men indicated they were delaying marriage to finish their schooling. Nearly half of the young women identified educational goals as a significant influence in their decision not to marry at this time.

About 10 percent of the students report that their family pressures them not to marry while in college. We feel this is unfortunate because opportunities for meeting potential partners become much more limited after leaving BYU in most cases. Many BYU students are following the trend of the world to delay marriage and family for educational and professional reasons. Yet more undergraduates are married at BYU than at other four-year institutions.²¹

Summary and Recommendations

Leon Kass gave parents sound advice when he encouraged them to guide their children to religiously affiliated colleges and universities if they desire them to marry.²² This is particularly evident at BYU. Almost all students desire to marry and are confident that they will. They have been taught and recognize that marriage is “ordained of God” (D&C 49:15).

BYU students hang out in mixed groups, just like students at other universities, yet the casual sexual encounters associated with hooking up are virtually absent. Remarkably, only a few single BYU students report sexual experience. Most are keeping their commitment to chastity. Even though the dating culture at BYU may have changed somewhat in recent years, it is still an environment conducive to finding a mate who shares fundamental beliefs and values. The traits identified by BYU students as

desirable in a spouse are in some ways similar to those identified by other college students. Most want to marry someone who has a pleasant personality and is motivated to complete his or her education and pursue a career. What is dramatically different is that BYU students place a much higher premium on spirituality and religiosity than other students do. The characteristics BYU students are seeking will generally foster a strong and satisfying marital relationship. This is not to say that the process is easy. Students often struggle in the dating game. Most experience moments of fun and fulfillment but also times of despair when relationships are absent or fail.

BYU is a remarkable meeting place for LDS young people. Literally thousands of single members of the opposite sex, in the desired age range and with many of the desired traits, including shared religious values, are gathered there. The sheer number of potential partners may be bewildering and make it hard to decide to marry—77 percent of BYU’s nearly thirty thousand students are single²³—but most students appreciate the opportunity to meet and date in a religious atmosphere. It is encouraging to see that most BYU students eventually marry.

An earlier version of this article appeared in Mary Jane Woodger, Thomas B. Holman, and Kristi A. Young, eds., *Latter-day Saint Courtship Patterns*, Studies in Religion and the Social Order (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 2007), 13–39.

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1. The survey used as a definition “the traditional sense of going out on dates in which the man invites a woman to go out, picks her up, and pays for the date.” According to the survey, “37 percent of the respondents [college women, freshmen to seniors] said they had been on more than six dates of this kind, and a third said they had been asked on two dates or fewer. We might not expect freshmen women to have had many dates after only four or five months at college, but only 47 percent of juniors and 50 percent of the seniors reported having had more than six

dates. Since 48 percent of the women reported having a current boyfriend and 60 percent said they had had at least one boyfriend since coming to college, it appears that a woman can have a boyfriend while participating in little or no dating, in the traditional sense." Norval Glenn and Elizabeth Marquardt, *Hooking Up, Hanging Out, and Hoping for Mr. Right: College Women on Dating and Mating Today* (New York: Institute for American Values, 2001), 26, available online at <http://center.americanvalues.org>, 26, or www.iwf.org, 22.

2. Glenn and Marquardt, *Hooking Up*, 14.
3. Honor Code of Brigham Young University, <http://honorcode.byu.edu>.
4. Gordon B. Hinckley, "A Unique and Wonderful University," devotional speech given at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, on October 11, 1988, 2, <http://speeches.byu.edu>.
5. Leon R. Kass, "The End of Courtship," *Public Interest* 126 (Winter 1997): 62.
6. Estimated Median Age at First Marriage, by Sex: 1890 to the Present, U.S. Census Bureau, <http://www.census.gov/population/socdemo/hh-fam/ms2.pdf>.
7. Jerald G. Bachman, Lloyd D. Johnston, and Patrick M. O'Malley, *Monitoring the Future: Questionnaire Responses from the Nation's High School Seniors: 2000* (Ann Arbor: Institute for Social Research, University of Michigan, 2001).
8. Kass, "End of Courtship," 40–41; Glenn and Marquardt, *Hooking Up*, 4–30; Marisa Milanese, "Hooking Up, Hanging Out, Making Up, Moving On," *Stanford Magazine* (May/June 2002): 62–65.
9. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance: National College Health Risk Behavior Survey—United States, 1995, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report 1997, 46(SS-6) 1-56, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, online at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/00049859.htm>. This is the CDC's most recent national data for college-age students.
10. Glenn and Marquardt, *Hooking Up*, 13.
11. Kass, "End of Courtship," 39–45; Glenn and Marquardt, *Hooking Up*, 24–41.
12. The responses were independently coded by two research assistants, and the reliability between them was over 95 percent.
13. Glenn and Marquardt, *Hooking Up*, 28.
14. David M. Buss, "The Psychology of Human Mate Selection: Exploring the Complexity of the Strategic Repertoire," in *Handbook of Evolutionary Psychology: Ideas, Issues and Applications*, ed. C. B. Crawford and D. L. Krebs (Mahwah, N.J.: Erlbaum, 1998): 420; Stephanie Stewart, Heather Stinnett, and Lawrence B. Rosenfeld, "Sex Differences in Desired Characteristics of Short-Term and Long-Term Relationship Partners," *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships* 17, no. 6 (2000): 848.
15. Buss, "Psychology of Human Mate Selection," 420; Stewart, "Sex Differences," 848.
16. Jeffery R. Holland, "How Do I Love Thee?" address given at Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, on February 15, 2000, 3, <http://speeches.byu.edu>.
17. David Know, Laurin Gibson, Marty Zusman, and Charles Gallmeier, "Why College Students End Relationships," *College Student Journal* 31 (1997): 451.
18. Institutional Assessment and Analysis, "Missions, Marriage and Degree Attainment at BYU—Summary," unpublished report prepared by Institutional Assessment and Analysis Division, Brigham Young University, 2003, 1.

19. Glenn and Marquardt, *Hooking Up*, 25.

20. David Popenoe and Barbara Dafoe Whitehead, *The State of Our Unions: The Social Health of Marriage in America, 2000* (New Brunswick, N.J.: National Marriage Project Report, Rutgers University, 2000), 16, available online at <http://marriage.rutgers.edu>.

21. Institutional Assessment and Analysis, “Missions, Marriage and Degree Attainment at BYU—Summary,” states that 23 percent of BYU undergraduate students are married. The National Center for Education Statistics, “Profile of Undergraduates in U.S. Postsecondary Institutions: 1999–2000,” 90–91, at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2002168>, gives this data: 22 percent of undergraduates of any age at any college or university are married; 14.8 percent of students at four-year institutions are married; 5 percent of undergraduates age 19–23 years at any college or university are married; 28 percent of undergraduates age 24–29 at any college or university are married.

22. Kass, “The End of Courtship,” 39–63.

23. Quick Facts (2007), <http://byu.edu>.

“O Lord, My God”

Sheldon Lawrence

Joseph Smith’s dying words have always intrigued me. I like them, in part, for what they don’t say. The expression lacks a verb and thus neither asks nor confesses nor praises nor questions. It is not a plea for extended life or safety. It is not the dying command of a captain to attack or take cover. We find no last instructions to the Saints or final declaration of love and loyalty. But rather as the hot lead balls tore through the prophet’s body, as he staggered at the window’s edge and fell into the tragic fulfillment of his last prophecy, Joseph used his last breath to call out the simple but holy words “O Lord, my God.”

“Daddy? . . . Daddy? . . . Daddy? . . .” It was Isaac, my three-year-old son. I was in charge of putting him to bed, and he was beginning to get nervous. It was a new house filled with strange shadows in nooks and closets that he had not yet explored. The golden light of late fall had faded quickly into dusk, and it was that time in the evening when the house reaches its darkest point before someone finally thinks to turn on the lights. He was nervous, for he knew he would soon be in his room alone with the shadows. He was old enough now that his imagination was filling the empty closets with monsters of various shapes and sizes.

“Daddy? . . . Daddy? . . .” Lately he had taken to repeating this word as if it were a mantra. He had discovered the power of language—the power of words—to provide comfort against the darkness.

“What, Isaac?” I answered, making yet one more effort to get him to articulate his desire. “Are you hungry?” As soon as I made my presence known, as soon as he knew I was listening, he did not make a request but simply changed his tone to one of satisfaction. But when my attention drifted, he returned to the pleading, “Daddy?” until my mind was with

him again. His only request, it seemed, was that my open ear receive his voice in his moment of fear—not a plea for help but for nearness.

Once I was fully with him, he approached bedtime with a kind of brave resignation. Like a soldier suiting up for battle, he held my knees for balance as he put on his “jammies” one leg at a time. We proceeded with the nightly routine of going potty and filling the sippy cup. He would go willingly as long as certain precautions were taken, certain protocols followed. The nightlight would have to be turned on, the closet door shut. His bed became like an Egyptian tomb filled with earthly treasures—toys, stuffed animals, books—that would accompany him on his journey.

And he filled the empty room with the sound of his own words. His small chattering voice echoed in the hollow room, for pictures had not yet been hung. He was more afraid than usual. I think he sensed fear in me—sensed that something had been bothering me. I had learned of a recent death in the ward, and I kept thinking about it at unexpected times. A young family had just buried their six-year-old boy after a six-month battle with cancer. I didn’t know his name. I had heard that he loved horses and four wheelers and his little brother. I had seen his father in sacrament meeting staring into the distance with red, swollen eyes. I had heard his mother bear her testimony and almost not make it through.

The news bothered me—it interrupted me. For I had been living the life of an immortal, a life of eternal progression: a new job, a new house, young children. My faith was the faith required for new ambitious beginnings, not the equally important faith required for endings.

So I was quieter than usual as I tucked Isaac into his covers and knelt by his bed to tell a story. The dim nightlight cast irregular shadows across the empty room, and blinds that would not close entirely let the light of dusk seep in through the cracks and pour onto the walls. I let him tell most of the story, giving him prompts and letting him fill in the blanks.

Once upon a time, there was a little boy named Isaac who was walking through the forest when suddenly he saw a . . . *great big waterfall*. What was the waterfall made out of? *Chocolate milk*. Did Isaac swim in the waterfall? *No he just kept going in the forest and then all the sudden he saw a big, giant cave*.

His eyes are wide with excitement at the good fortune of finding a cave. A cave has so many possibilities. It could contain monsters or fortunes or both. There is a touch of fear in his eyes as he thinks about the possibilities. I think of when he was a newborn, when *I* was afraid of the possibilities. For when I first looked into his squinting, puzzled eyes, I did not think of the miracle of new life or the love of God, as some had told me I would. I thought of death. I knew that by creating a life I had also created a death.

I felt guilty that I could not shake this morbid thought, so I concealed it, buried it like a secret sin as I received balloons and handshakes from well-wishers who were trying to figure out, of all things, whose eyes the child had. I acted the part of a proud father, but inwardly I was terrified. It was as if by creating a child I had recklessly partaken of a different kind of forbidden fruit. Unlike Adam, who brought death and sin into a world of innocence, I had brought innocence into a world of death and sin. What had I done by bringing into the world a life whose joys and misfortunes were now inextricably entwined with my own?

It is a failing, my inability to feel love without also feeling an equal and opposite pang of sadness and fear. It indicates my lack of faith and hope. This sadness occurs in almost the very instant of love, as frighteningly swift as thunder follows lightning. It was probably for this same reason that I didn't at first call my firstborn by his name. I instead called him, to the chagrin of his mother, "the boy" or "man cub." I still had mixed feelings about naming him after the boy who, for reasons debated by countless philosophers and theologians, almost did not grow into a man. In naming him Isaac had we unwittingly called upon some cosmic irony to test us as Abraham? Had we made it too easy for God to teach us a lesson in faith?

A big, giant cave? Then what happened? *I went inside it and there was a great big bear inside. But he was a nice bear and gave me candy. And he was just a nice bear, and we built a fire and put sticks into it.*

As I stroke his messy hair, he looks at me with the faith that I can save him from anything that might happen in this story—a story we are inventing together—a story with an unknown ending. I realize just how much he is in me and I am in him and how we will never be the same. A deep love surges like lightning followed quickly by the thunder of doubt and fear. The story is too uncertain with too many unknowns.

An image flashes in my mind of a young family surrounding the bed of a pale, sickly child. They are saying goodbye, and, because he asked them, they are doing their best to tell him what heaven might be like. They are full of love and anger and hope and fear as they stand at the precipice of a window's edge and look down into uncertainty. And for a moment, while Isaac continues to talk of imaginary adventures, I become unhinged—adrift in a sea of sadness and fear until as if by instinct the right words—holy words—enter my mind like an outstretched hand to keep me from drowning in the tempest. *O Lord, my God.*

After Sorrow

I used to think *something good*
must be coming when a day came
like this one The light strong again
after rain after the slow gathering-in
of the days the nights getting darker and colder
I am older now A day comes
The poplars not torches but lit
with their own leaves dying A mist
breathes out from the shining fields
And this is good The light the mist
the color of the leaves A broken quorum
of brown wrens flutter and settle
their paths of flight binding up the branches
of a shattered apple tree Abandoned
fruit gleams wet and round and red
against the cracked black trunk
Something good The present voices
of the birds The sun rising in November

—MaryJan Munger

*This poem won first place in the 2007 BYU Studies
poetry contest.*

Old Folsom Prison—East Gate

James M. Thorne

One approaches the east gate at Old Folsom in an old, blue school bus that ferries visitors from the modern check-in facility, past the faceless, gray concrete panels of New Folsom, and then turns left along the massive, hewn-granite walls that march down the hill to the east gate. The bus pauses periodically along this descent and inches over three speed bumps set in the asphalt for some obscure administrative reason.

I wonder aloud as to whether the staff had once used this odd stretch of road as a drag strip as we hunch up our muscles to absorb what the old bus's springs gave up absorbing years ago. My wife simply shrugs her shoulders and watches gray granite slide past the window.

At the turn of the century, when the state of California began looking for a new prison site, the local granite around Folsom attracted their attention. Hard labor was considered to be redeeming in and of itself, and so the prison grew as the prisoners walled themselves in with ancient stone and redemptive labor.

At the bottom of the hill, the bus makes a wide U-turn to the left and parks opposite the gate. Disembarking, we get our first full view of it.

Dante would have loved it. Hand-hewn out of the granite by those early prisoners, the gate has character—it's a minor architectural wonder. Imposing, Romanesque, medieval, it has anchored the northeast corner of the perimeter wall for the better part of a century. Yet there is a studied, deliberate asymmetry to it that is curiously modern. The main arch on the left, with its frowning stone portcullis and iron gate, is balanced on the right with the corbelled and witch-hatted watchtower. Contrawise, the small personnel gate on the right, with its own arch springing from the haunch of the main arch, is balanced on the left with a great iron lantern that may



Folsom State Prison, Folsom, California.

or may not have ever given light, but seems so appropriately placed that the gate would be incomplete without it.

There is a cartouche above the personnel door that says “FSP,” for Folsom State Prison. A small sign adjacent to the door states, in English and Spanish, that firearms, drugs, and explosives are not allowed. No sign tells one to “abandon hope, all ye who enter,” but the grim massif of the gate and the portent of what it symbolizes are not encouraging.

The gate is not unphotogenic. The authorities are proudly aware of it and keep the area well landscaped, and have even designated a spot up the hill for the taking of pictures, although cameras are not allowed to visitors going inside. Hollywood discovered the gate, however, and the footage of it pops up both on television and on the screen from time to time. The 1979 movie, *The Jericho Mile*, about prisoner Larry “Rain” Murphy, who ran a 3:52:09 mile on an Olympic qualifying track built for him in the main yard by his fellow prisoners, was filmed in its entirety at Folsom Prison, with many of the prisoners as actors and extras. A substantial portion of Edward James Olmos’s gritty little film *American Me* was filmed at Old Folsom, again with some of the guards posing as extras for the film. Some of the opening sequences to *Frankie and Johnny* were photographed at the

east gate, and *America's Most Wanted* featured Old Folsom on one of its programs.

In the movie *Frankie and Johnny*, Al Pacino is shown jumping back and forth inside and outside of the large gate upon his release. In reality, that gate is a vehicle gate, and all personnel enter and exit through the smaller gate on the right. Here, the sense of the medieval is heightened on passing through. If the gate is an iron maw, the antechamber inside is its stone gullet. Tiny and dimly lit, the antechamber reveals nothing but stone and iron—there is no softness anywhere—and spider webs and exposed plumbing decorate the unlit ceilings. In the winter, a single radiant space heater takes the chill off only those who are directly under it.

We wait patiently in line until a guard within a bullet-proof glass cell determines that all other doors and gates are closed and locked and finally pushes the button to allow us to enter the final screening room. This room is every bit as small as the antechamber, but has white, plastered walls and even a ceiling. Central to the room is a metal detector, which is sensitive enough to detect underwire bras and metal buttons and to send disgruntled visitors back to their cars to make clothing adjustments. My wife and I learned early to dress simply and nonmetallically. We remove our watches, and I remove my belt, and we put them in our shoes, which now sit on the counter awaiting inspection. Stocking-footed, we pass through the detector undetected and now wait for our shoes and watches and my belt to catch up with us.

When we are fully dressed again and have answered to a roll call, we accompany the guard out the rear door and into the bright and welcome sunlight of the inner yard. We are told to walk in pairs and in line, and, like schoolchildren, we descend the hill from the gate toward the visiting area, our eyes anxious and searching. (There! I think that's him—tall, with blonde hair. Does he see us yet?)

Posted regulations inform us that we are allowed one embrace and one kiss, and that our visit will be terminated if we try to squeeze any more love than that out of our visit. I let my wife receive the kiss and the hug and we look around for a free table and chairs. (He looks good—he's been working out. He'll probably tell us what he can press.)

Most inmates do bulk up while serving time. Weights were popular—part of survival training. (I wish I didn't have to think about that.) The outside public seemed to worry about this from time to time. The idea of brawny ex-cons out on parole bothered them, and “tough on crime” politicians regularly attacked weight-training within the prisons. The inmates were puzzled by this. “What are we going to do? Walk into a bank, flex our bicep, and demand money?”

Prison administrators, for a while, walked the balance. Weight piles gave a necessary outlet for energy, and they also allowed inmates to gain a certain amount of respect—a hands-off type of respect. Nevertheless, sensitive to criticism that they were running “country clubs,” the wardens and administrators no longer allow the weights. The prisoners adapt by doing push-ups with someone sitting on their backs or squats with someone on their shoulders. (Country clubs! I wish people could only see. I wish that they could feel the bureaucratic arrogance that reduces men to numbers, to nonpeople. The same pettiness that allots one hug and one kiss—prison regulations that tell you how much you can love and no more.)

We talk and eat. Vending machines supply sandwiches and snacks although there are nearly always long lines. There are some microwave ovens with their long lines as well. Conversation centers on family and friends—less and less about old friends from outside, and more and more about cellmates and workout partners. I worry sometimes about this acclimatization. Home is not here—it can’t ever be here! But maybe he faces reality better than I do. He points out one of the more famous inmates, a handsome young man sitting with a pretty girl; he was convicted in the Los Angeles Billionaire Boys Club case. The waste of such beauty depresses me.

He mentions that a bishop from one of the Folsom wards comes in regularly to visit him and often brings in freshly baked brownies or banana bread. This is absolutely forbidden—contraband—and not allowed in, period. Who knows what drugs the good bishop’s wife could slip into the recipe. But the Catholic priest, who is in charge of church visits, sees the Tupperware under the books and winks at the guard and tells him not to look too closely. The treats taste especially good because they are contraband.

He requests a subscription to *National Geographic*. The magazine is quite popular within the prisons. I am somewhat bemused by this. I love *National Geographic* myself and can understand that there is a certain amount of escapism between its pages—“far away places with strange-sounding names” is the way the song goes. But he explains that the magazine is small enough to slip in underneath your shirt, but thick enough to stop a knife blade, and I am brought back to reality with unpleasant abruptness. (How can one live like this! My heart hurts just to think about it. The check goes out to *National Geographic* as soon as we get home.)

The loudspeaker blares out that, due to overcrowding, some visits will be terminated, and we listen for his name to be called. When it finally is, we get up, yield our table and chairs to another family, and go to the gate for our regulatory hug and kiss. I suppose, now that our visit is already terminated, my wife could steal a second kiss, but she never does. We say

goodbye and form up in our column to be marched back up to the east gate. He will be stripped and searched—all body orifices—a humiliation that is now so matter-of-fact that it is no longer humiliation. But what does it do to the human soul—of both guard and prisoner?

Upon arriving at the gate, the process is reversed. We go back through the stone gullet and are regurgitated from the iron maw. Our blue school bus is there waiting, and we pull away from the fearsome, frowning gate and up the hill toward the three speed bumps, and try not to think about *National Geographic* as the gray, granite walls slide past the other side of the bus.

This essay by James M. Thorne (jmthorne@comcast.net) won first place in the 2007 *BYU Studies* personal essay contest.

The lengthy document presented below was written by Peter Christian Kierkegaard in Denmark in 1854. The *BYU Studies* editorial board was impressed with the high quality of Julie K. Allen's translation of this booklet into English, with the usefulness of solid footnotes added by Julie K. Allen and David L. Paulsen, and with the academic value of the introduction they have provided to help readers contextualize this historical artifact. While most clergy mocked or slandered Mormonism in its early years, it is interesting to see that some engaged it seriously, even if not completely respectfully.

Peter Christian Kierkegaard was the brother of Søren Kierkegaard, the famous Danish philosopher. Historians and general readers will be interested in Peter Christian's arguments against Mormonism, as he saw early LDS missionaries come to his area and convert many of his parishioners and countrymen. This document provides previously unknown evidence of what the LDS missionaries in Denmark were teaching. Their approach to preaching the gospel marshaled biblical scriptures to support their messages that God has a body; that the Book of Mormon is the stick of Joseph mentioned in Ezekiel 37 and is the record of the "other sheep" referred to in John 10:16; that there was an apostasy; that Joseph Smith restored the priesthood and the true ordinance of baptism; and that converts must gather to Zion in the deserts of the west (Matt. 21:23–27) to avoid the impending judgment of God upon the world.

Writing from a Protestant perspective, Kierkegaard argued polemically in rebuttal that the Mormon restoration was unnecessary. He claimed that the gospel continued in an unbroken chain of witnesses down to the present, and he asserted that Matthew 16:18 and 28:19–20 guarantee the absolute success of Christ's church no matter what. While Kierkegaard quibbled over a number of minor points, he mainly saw no lack of authority in the body of Christian believers.

In spite of the irreconcilable differences between these two positions, it is interesting to note the common ground that both sides actually share in the document's final section on reason and revelation. Kierkegaard insisted that God's thoughts are above ours (Isa. 55:8); that we hear the truth by hearing God's voice (John 18:37); that we must sometimes act blindly, but that God will provide sufficient reasons; that individuals must decide and trust for themselves, should fulfill their baptismal covenants, can know of the truth of the doctrine by experience (John 7:16–17), and will enjoy God's abundance. The LDS missionaries would wholeheartedly agree.

BYU Studies does not often publish documents such as this one; but then again, documents like this one do not come along very often. Kierkegaard's brochure transports us back a century and a half into a foreign land, but the topic is familiar. The debate still all comes down to authority.

The Reverend Dr. Peter Christian Kierkegaard's "About and Against Mormonism" (1855)

Julie K. Allen and David L. Paulsen

Born on July 6, 1805, the Danish Lutheran priest Peter Christian Kierkegaard, brother of philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, was an exact contemporary of Joseph Smith Jr., the founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Both men devoted their lives to the refinement and advancement of their religious beliefs, albeit within very different sociohistorical contexts, and both had profound impacts on the shape of the religious landscape in their home countries. While Peter Christian Kierkegaard, as the most eloquent and influential advocate of the views of the controversial nineteenth-century Danish religious reformer N. F. S. Grundtvig, concentrated on bringing about the shift from state-controlled to populist Protestant Christianity in Denmark, Joseph Smith professed to have restored the original church of Jesus Christ on the earth and set in motion a groundswell of worldwide missionary efforts designed to bring the news of this restoration to the four corners of the earth. Although Smith never set foot in Denmark, nor Kierkegaard in America, their ideological paths did cross in the late summer of 1854, slightly more than four years after the first emissaries of the LDS Church arrived in Denmark. Kierkegaard discovered that the Mormon missionaries had begun preaching in his parish, which encompassed the towns of Pedersborg and Kindertofte, near Sorø on the main Danish island of Zealand, and took it upon himself to combat their influence on his parishioners.

Kierkegaard's initial encounter with the Mormons consisted of a few conversations with local missionaries followed by attendance at a cottage meeting, where Kierkegaard was invited to respond to the missionaries' preaching. In his diary entry for August 1854, Kierkegaard describes the sequence of events as he experienced it:

Walking across BYU campus one snowy evening in January 2004, I fell into conversation with a man walking close by. When I mentioned that my PhD studies were in German and Danish, his eyes lit up and he asked if I was familiar with a text about the Mormons written by the brother of the famous Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard that he had recently discovered on microfilm in the Harold B. Lee Library. The man was BYU philosophy professor David L. Paulsen, and our casual conversation led to a three-year collaboration on the translation and annotation of that very text, Peter Christian Kierkegaard's "About and Against Mormonism," which appears in English translation for the first time in this article.



As I translated Peter Christian's text, I began to investigate the historical context of his remarks and how they fit in to the early history of the LDS church in Denmark. Tens of thousands of Danes, including four of David L. Paulsen's great-great-grandparents and my great-great grandmother, joined the LDS Church in the second half of the 19th century, often despite severe persecution. At first glance, it seemed that Peter Christian's text could be dismissed as run-of-the-mill anti-Mormon propaganda, but the more I learned about Peter Christian's life and beliefs, particularly his disagreements with his brother Søren about the state of Danish Christendom, the more I realized that his text was, in fact, an important part of a dialogue between Peter Christian, Søren, and the LDS missionaries about the all-important element of personal choice inherent in religious freedom, which had been granted in Denmark in 1849 for the first time since the adoption of Christianity there in the ninth century. Discovering how hard-won true religious freedom was for the early Scandinavian Saints and how courageously they exercised that freedom has helped me to appreciate even more the many freedoms which I enjoy and to exert myself to use those freedoms actively and responsibly.

On the 4th–5th discovered that the Mormons had come to Pedersborg and Kindertofte. Spoke with one who was visiting in Pedersborg town. Spoke with [Mathias C.] Hemerdt, who was with him and who has attended their meetings (for a long time?) elsewhere. With many others at his home, all of whom had been re-baptized in H—. On the 13th attended their meeting in Haugerup at Hemerdt's home and testified against them, God be praised, with noticeable effect.¹

Despite his belief that his remarks at the cottage meeting had effectively refuted the missionaries' claims, Kierkegaard apparently regarded the missionaries as a significant enough threat to the Danish church as a whole to warrant further effort, and so he adapted his impromptu remarks at the meeting in Hemerdt's home into a formal presentation that he delivered in local schoolhouses and then published twice. It was first published in January and February 1855 as a two-part article titled "Om og mod Mormonismen" (About and Against Mormonism) in *Dansk Kirketidende* (Danish Church Times), an influential organ for conveying the views of the Danish state church; then the article was published later that summer as an independent pamphlet by C. G. Iversen.² The article is reproduced in full on pages 113–56 in this journal.

The motivation for Kierkegaard's efforts can be found in his diary entries, particularly from March and June 1855, which reveal his annoyance over the continued presence and increasing success of the LDS missionaries in his parish. Given Kierkegaard's intensive intellectual and religious training in the Kierkegaard home, his doctoral degrees in theology and philosophy, and his vaunted skill as a debater (he was known as "the debating devil from the North"³), it is not surprising that Kierkegaard's response to the preaching of three minimally educated lay Mormon missionaries is stunning for its erudition, density, and scathing wit. He was by no means as gifted a writer as his brother Søren, but his friends and enemies alike readily admitted that he was a masterful public speaker. In dry printed prose, Kierkegaard's convoluted sentences and complex logical chains can be daunting at times to unravel, but if we try to imagine hearing those same words from the mouth of the brilliant Reverend Dr. Kierkegaard at the pinnacle of his career, as he amused and scolded his audience by turns, we can

1. Peter Christian Kierkegaard, Journal, 1850–59, August 4, 1854, Det Kongelige Bibliotek (Danish Royal Library), Copenhagen, Denmark. All translations from Danish texts are by Julie K. Allen.

2. Peter Christian Kierkegaard, *Om og mod Mormonismen* (Copenhagen: C. G. Iversen, 1855).

3. He was called "Disputerdjævelen fra Norden." Otto Holmgaard, in *Peter Christian Kierkegaard: Grundtvig's Lærling* [Grundtvig's Apprentice] (Copenhagen: Rosenkilde og Bagger, 1953), 22.

perhaps catch a glimpse of the “noticeable effect” he believed his words to have had on those of his parishioners who had begun to investigate this new American religion.

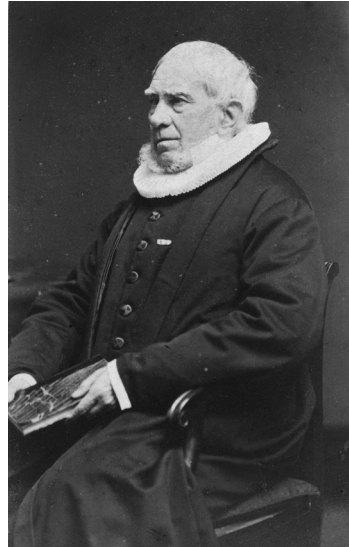
Kierkegaard’s rebuttal of the missionaries’ speeches is also notable for its relative objectivity. Though he mocks some of the missionaries’ claims that he regards as “secondary,” for example that Joseph Smith found a set of gold plates or that the record on those plates documents the migration of sixth-century BC Israelites across the ocean to the Americas, Kierkegaard devotes the bulk of his time to considering the missionaries’ foundational doctrinal points seriously and exhaustively rather than resorting to personal slanders or rumors. As a result, his tract provides valuable insights into both the doctrines being taught by early LDS missionaries in Denmark and some of the central points of divergence between their representation of Joseph Smith’s restored gospel and Kierkegaard’s interpretation of the Grundtvigian conception of Christianity.

Kierkegaard’s Support for Grundtvigian Doctrines

The latter distinction is particularly important, because Kierkegaard, although he would seem to represent the official position of the Danish state church by virtue of his office as pastor and his prominence in Danish intellectual life at the time, was in many ways as much a rebel against the established traditions of Danish Lutheranism as Joseph Smith was to conventional Christianity in general. By publicly promoting Grundtvig’s reformist doctrines, particularly the primacy of the oral transmission of doctrine and the inadmissibility of governmental involvement in religious matters, Kierkegaard had made himself *persona non grata* not only with the leadership of the church, notably Bishops Mynster and Martensen, but also with his brother Søren, who felt that Grundtvigianism posed the most significant threat to true Christianity in mid-nineteenth-century Denmark. Peter Christian Kierkegaard’s Grundtvigian sympathies caused him to be denied—twice—the professorship at the University of Copenhagen that he dearly wanted. Instead of obtaining a professorship, within a year of his publication of “About and Against Mormonism” he was appointed bishop of Aalborg, which was a promotion, but one that brought about his exile to “Jutland’s Siberia” and thus his effective removal from Copenhagen’s intellectual circles.

In refuting the missionaries’ teachings, Kierkegaard refers frequently to the Danish state church as the “holy universal Church” rather than as *Folkekirken* (the People’s Church), a term he himself had coined in an article in the early 1840s and which had become the official designation of the Danish state church in the Danish constitution of 1849. Much of

Kierkegaard's opposition to the possibility of the restoration of the church of Jesus Christ, by Joseph Smith or anyone else, hinges on the Grundtvigian belief, derived from the writings of the second-century church father Irenaeus, that the oral confession of faith in Jesus Christ and the oral transmission of doctrine binds all Christians together into a single church that is the body of Christ. By this reasoning, Kierkegaard argues that there is an unbroken oral chain of legitimacy linking the church established by Jesus Christ while he lived on the earth to the Christianity practiced in Denmark in the mid-nineteenth century. Although the Danish church has been Protestant since the sixteenth century and Kierkegaard never exhibits any sympathy for Catholic doctrine, he argues, along with Grundtvig, that true Christianity accesses the authority of Jesus Christ directly through the continued oral transmission of doctrine and the common confession of faith by the people of the church.⁴



Peter Christian Kierkegaard (1805–1888), Danish theologian. He was bishop of Aalborg and also served as Denmark's minister of church, education, and culture. Photo courtesy the Royal Library in Copenhagen.

Kierkegaard's Attitudes toward Religious Freedom

Of greater long-term impact than his doctrinal disagreement with the Danish ecclesiastical establishment, however, was Kierkegaard's instrumental role through articles and speeches and later while serving as minister of education and culture in bringing about the passage of laws that dissolved Denmark's traditional parish bonds and allowed for the establishment of free-choice congregations within the church throughout the entire country, rather than just in Copenhagen, where that freedom was

4. Most resources on Grundtvig and Grundtvigianism are in Danish, although some suggestions for further reading about the topic in English include A. M. Allchin, *N. F. S. Grundtvig: An Introduction to His Life and Work* (London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1997); A. M. Allchin and others, eds., *Heritage and Prophecy: Grundtvig and the English-Speaking World* (Aarhus, Denmark: Aarhus University Press, 1993); and Poul Dam, *Nikolaj Frederik Severin Grundtvig (1783–1872)* (Copenhagen: Royal Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 1983).

well established. These two innovations contributed significantly to the liberalization of the Danish state church after the mid-nineteenth century, and Kierkegaard's support of these measures illustrates his fundamental belief in individual freedom of religion, albeit within the framework of mainstream Protestantism, which had just been established by the Danish constitution of 1849. Unlike many of his fellow Danish clergymen who spread slanderous reports and instigated physical harassment of Mormon missionaries and converts, Kierkegaard's opposition to Mormonism as set forth in "About and Against Mormonism" seems to be based in sincere disagreement on specific, fundamental doctrinal issues and questions of scriptural interpretation rather than disapproval of peripheral issues such as Joseph Smith's supposed personal shortcomings or even the practice of polygamy among the Latter-day Saints in Utah, which had been unknown in Denmark until its announcement by LDS Scandinavian Mission President John Van Cott in October 1853.⁵

Kierkegaard's dispassionate discussion of Mormonism—which he rather humorously associates with other heretical groups whose names begin with the letter "M," including Montanists, Manichees, Monophysites, Monothelites, Mohammedans, and Mennonites—situates Mormonism as a movement within a larger context of dissenters from mainstream Christianity. Kierkegaard's article thereby gains significance for an audience outside the Mormon community, as Mark Noll has pointed out about a contemporaneous Catholic anti-Mormon essay, "Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism," by taking into account the larger social, historical, and theological contexts from which Mormonism had emerged.⁶ The essay Noll discusses appeared in the influential international Catholic journal *La Civiltà Cattolica*, while the journal in which Kierkegaard's article appeared, *Dansk Kirketidende*, was circulated only within Denmark. *Dansk Kirketidende* functioned as a central clearinghouse for news and opinions relating to the Danish state church, and publication in this journal made the article prominent enough to direct discussion about Mormonism among Danish intellectuals and theologians away from an initial preoccupation with Mormonism's supposedly scandalous origins to more reflective consideration of its doctrinal positions in relation to those of the main variants of Danish Protestantism.

5. In his diaries and letters, Van Cott frequently mentions the role of the Danish clergy in the persecution of the early Danish Saints. See Annie Van Cott, "Van Cott History," Typescript, L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah.

6. Mark A. Noll, "A Jesuit Interpretation of Mid-Nineteenth-Century America: 'Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism,'" *BYU Studies* 45:3 (2006), 39–74.

Despite the fierce opposition to Mormonism within Danish society that manifested itself in street riots, disrupted meetings, and damaged meetinghouses, many Danes were quite receptive to the Mormon missionaries' message, and most converts gathered to Utah. At the time of Kierkegaard's polemic, approximately 80 percent of all Danish converts were emigrating to Utah, a wave that continued unabated for several decades, reaching its peak in the 1860s.⁷ As a representative example, Mathias C. Hemerdt, the parishioner who hosted the cottage meeting at which Kierkegaard spoke, was baptized into the LDS Church two weeks following the meeting, and he and his family emigrated to Utah the following year. Others of Kierkegaard's parishioners, a few of whom he mentioned by name in his diary upon learning of their "re-baptism," followed suit, and the Haugerup Branch of the Church was officially organized in June 1855, almost precisely concurrent with the book publication of Kierkegaard's tract, which marked the end of his public opposition of Mormonism.⁸ After his appointment as bishop of Aalborg in 1856, Kierkegaard continued to combat the spread of various sects in Denmark in public speeches and articles, but he had little more to say on the subject of Mormonism.

For students of Mormon history, Kierkegaard's text offers important insights into the nature of Mormon missionary work in Denmark, not least by illustrating that Denmark was very much an ideological battleground at the time, a fact that is often obscured in LDS accounts by the impressive numbers of Danish converts to Mormonism. The text also shows the valor of the early missionaries and converts to Mormonism, despite their being less educated and prominent than Kierkegaard. Although Kierkegaard's erudition and theological training allowed him to challenge the lay missionaries on many points of Christian history, doctrine, and scriptural interpretation, his printed account of the meeting confirms the remarkable consistency between these early, uneducated missionaries' teachings and contemporary LDS doctrine, while his own arguments, many of which diverge from standard doctrine of the Danish People's Church at the time,

7. Jørgen Würtz Sørensen, *Rejsen til Amerikas Zion. Den danske mormon-udvandring før århundredeskiftet* [The Journey to America's Zion. The Danish Mormon Emigration Prior to the Turn of the Century] (Aalborg: Fenre Press, 1985), 10.

8. The membership records of the Haugerup Branch from 1855 to 1859 are available on microfiche in the LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City. In Kierkegaard's diary entry for June 1855, he mentions the conversion to Mormonism of more of his parishioners, including the farmer Niels Nielsen, Nielsen's hired hand Jens Hansen, whose confirmation Kierkegaard had just performed the previous spring, and the farmer/carpenter Nicolai Sørensen and his wife and son. Kierkegaard, Journal, June 1855.

reveal the doctrinal dissension within Danish Protestantism and within his own family.⁹ Meanwhile, his self-satisfaction at having effectively warned his parishioners against the Mormon heresy was undermined by the conversions of so many of his listeners and their lifelong dedication to the faith they embraced.¹⁰

In fact, the encounter seems to have made much more of an impression on Kierkegaard himself than on any of his listeners; in comparison with his repeated references to the Mormons in his diary, only one person present at the meeting, Isaac Sørensen, left a written record of it, and that without referring to Kierkegaard by name. The missionaries apparently did not find the experience of facing the distinguished Reverend Dr. Kierkegaard significant enough to mention, either to their mission president or in the mission minutes. Yet it is likely that Kierkegaard's skillful dissection of the missionaries' claims had a stimulating effect on their preparation for future presentations, which would have served them in good stead, since at least one of the missionaries probably present at the meeting, Christian Daniel Fjeldsted, went on to serve nearly a dozen years more as a missionary and mission president in Scandinavia and later as a Church leader in Utah.¹¹ Moreover, Kierkegaard's generally serious treatment of the fundamental aspects of LDS doctrine may have prompted his listeners to consider it carefully and prayerfully. A century and a half later, Kierkegaard's speech not only illustrates the fierce struggle for religious self-determination that took place in Denmark in the mid-nineteenth century but also testifies of the courage of the early Danish missionaries and converts in embracing Mormonism in the face of criticism from people as influential and well-respected as Peter Christian Kierkegaard.

9. Kierkegaard's support of Grundtvig was the source of considerable disagreement with his brother Søren, whose *Attack on Christendom* series inflamed Danish society during this same period and led to a breach between the two brothers that was never mended.

10. At least four attendees of the meeting, Hemerdt and his wife and two neighbor boys, Isaac and Frederik Sørensen, were baptized and emigrated to Utah.

11. As far as can be determined from mission and branch records, as well as the personal history of the Danish convert Nicolai Sørensen, the missionaries who preached at the meeting were, most likely, twenty-five-year-old Christian Daniel Fjeldsted, C. R. Rasmussen, and Søren Christoffersen, who was serving as president of the local Søndre Overdem Branch in 1854. Haugerup Branch Records 1855–59, 12–13; Jacob F. Sorensen, *History of Jacob Sorensen as Related to His Daughter-in-Law Verna B. Maughan Sorensen*, January 1934, Mendon, Utah, typed manuscript, available online at sorensenfamihistory.org. After his emigration to Utah in 1858, C. D. Fjeldsted, as he was known in Utah, returned to serve missions in Scandinavia in 1867–70, 1881–84, and 1886–90. He died in Utah in 1905 while serving as one of the seven Presidents of the Seventy.

Summary of Kierkegaard's Argument

As far as content and strategy are concerned, Kierkegaard's reaction to the message of the Mormon elders is a fairly typical Protestant response, countering the LDS use of certain biblical verses with standard evangelical interpretations. While he chides the missionaries for imputing certain meanings to these texts, he likewise privileges the readings that his tradition has given to these passages. As such, Kierkegaard's publication allows readers today to step back into the kind of give-and-take that must have occurred regularly on the streets of Copenhagen and elsewhere in northern Europe as the Latter-day Saints spread their message of the Restoration, the Apostasy, and the need for authority and baptism, and called people to gather to Zion in the mountain West. Kierkegaard's response is grounded in a form of biblical rationalism, and he selectively quotes biblical verses in an effort to disprove Joseph Smith's teachings. Additionally, Kierkegaard appeals heavily to the strength of Christian tradition over the centuries. He launches his polemic by attacking five specific details, and then turns most of his attention to three points that he identifies as "central claims."

In attacking the five preliminary points, Kierkegaard cuts a wide swath. (1) He asserts that John 10:16, which refers to the Savior bringing his sheep "not of this fold," must be understood narrowly as referring to "the heathen tribes," not to Israelites in the Americas. (2) He claims that the reunification of the sticks of Judah and Joseph in Ezekiel 37:16 refers only to the millennial reunification of divided Israel, and in no way to the union of the words of scattered Israel in the Book of Mormon and the Bible. He points out that the Book of Mormon was written on metal plates, not on a notched stick as he thinks Ezekiel describes. (3) Kierkegaard reminds readers that blacks were not brought to the United States until the seventeenth century and that this is contrary to the Book of Mormon's claim about Native Americans having a "skin of blackness" (2 Ne. 5:21). (4) He also objects that the other angel flying in the midst of heaven in Revelation 14:6 cannot refer to Moroni. And (5) he finds offensive the radical anthropomorphism being taught, that God the Father has a body.

In the main body of his publication, Kierkegaard goes on to address what he sees as the three central claims of Mormonism: (1) that the true church of God no longer exists, (2) that baptism has been unmistakably and incontrovertibly distorted and corrupted, and (3) that the Second Coming is near and people must gather with the Mormons in order to escape the impending judgments on the wicked. Actually, Kierkegaard's argument that the church of God was never lost from the earth is foundational to the ensuing arguments, and all of his three final points reduce to

the same question of whether a great apostasy and loss of divine authority occurred in Christianity or not.

As a Protestant, Kierkegaard sees the church as a simple concept, not as complicated as some want to make it, he says. Kierkegaard defends the state of confusion within Christianity, saying that confusion has been there from the beginning. Each Christian makes sense of God's revelation in Christ in unique ways. He uses this typical Protestant platform to contest the idea that any one religion can lay claim to being the "only true" Christianity.

In the same vein, he sees the Latter-day Saints' claim of being Christian to be inconsistent with their rejection of Christianity, and he claims that it will not solve the problem to add one new party to the confusion. He defends the sincerity of Christian theologians such as Augustine and Luther as constituting an unbroken chain of witnesses, and thus the doctrinal dissonance among them and others does not negate the truthfulness of the corporate Christian confession. Needless to say, these assertions are more like declarations of faith than reasoned conclusions on Kierkegaard's part.

Next, he argues that the Old Testament makes it clear that God covenanted with Israel that he would not let his covenant people perish. Likewise, he asserts, God's work cannot fail, and faith in a historical savior necessarily implies that he is historically connected with the world until the end of time, citing Matthew 28:19–20, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world." He also relies heavily on Matthew 16:18, a scripture most often used by Catholics, that "the gates of hell shall not prevail against [the church]," although these passages can certainly be understood differently.

Consequently, he continues, if the church is the triumphant fulfillment of God's promises, then the authority and mode of baptism used by the church are correct. Kierkegaard punctuates his polemic by saying that John the Baptist was not the being who appeared to Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, but the being was Satan himself. Furthermore, Kierkegaard asks how Joseph Smith could see God if he were not properly baptized. He points out that the Greek word *baptizō* does not necessarily mean immerse, and he gives examples of children among the believers in the New Testament. Unaware of the Latter-day Saint Article of Faith 8, Kierkegaard scolds the Mormon elders for blindly believing in the accuracy of the Bible and fails to recognize that most of the LDS teachings he questions are not founded exclusively on the Bible.

Kierkegaard then argues that as the church of God is on the earth scattered throughout the fellowship of Christian confession, that church will rise to meet the Lord in the air when he returns. Thus, there is no need for a gathering, as Joseph Smith taught. Kierkegaard says that the Mormon kingdom-building project is anachronous, as God will not

establish his kingdom until Christ returns and that the Millennium will not come until after the resurrection of the dead. Christians should not be constructing spiritual-temporal kingdoms. Leaders like the Pope, he says, just want to amass wealth. Instead, Christians should wait upon the Lord's return to build the kingdom, for his kingdom is not of this world.

Finally, Kierkegaard concludes with an appeal to reason as the arbiter of Christian truth, but still exhorts readers to obey what he is saying even if it is irrational. He accuses Mormons of appealing to reason, but decrying it at the same time—a move he makes himself. He says that Joseph Smith's revelations and truth claims are not consistent with reason, and that Christianity is reasonable; but at the same time, he argues that God's thoughts are above ours, and that sometimes we must accept belief blindly, although God will provide sufficient reasons to believe. Individuals must decide and trust for themselves. Then through Christian praxis (John 7:16–17), they will know the truth of Christian doctrine in a lifelong trial of the veracity of Christianity.

Placing the Article in Perspective

Stepping back from this publication, modern readers will find that Kierkegaard's treatment of Mormonism is interesting not just for its own sake but also when compared with other mid-nineteenth-century responses to the messages of the Restoration. One other such treatment is the previously mentioned "Mormonism in Connection with Modern Protestantism," written in 1860 by the Catholic cardinal Karl August von Reisach (1800–1869).¹² Both Cardinal Reisach and Reverend Kierkegaard were vehemently opposed to Mormonism, but each brought different assumptions and different rhetorical strategies to bear in their arguments against the Latter-day Saints. Thinking about those differences opens a window into the particular ways in which Mormonism was perceived by Catholic and Protestant writers at that time.

Both Kierkegaard and Reisach ground their arguments in the question of authority and appeal to the idea of a universal church, but they do so in different ways. For Kierkegaard, the authority to baptize has been passed down through an unbroken chain of believers. For Reisach, the authority has been passed down in an unbroken chain of church authorities. Both cite the rock of Peter as foundational, but for Reisach it represents papal authority and for Kierkegaard the authority of faith and confession. Kierkegaard claims the consolidated authority of Rome leads to tyranny

12. Noll, "Jesuit Interpretation," 39–74.

and apostasy, while Reisach claims the lack of consolidated authority leads to confusion and deception. Reisach rejects Protestantism and views Mormonism as the logical extension of the Protestant Reformation—the dangerous result of decentralized authority. Without the authority of the church to arbitrate disputes, it is only natural that someone like Joseph Smith would emerge seeking to address the errors of the Reformation. For Kierkegaard and others like him, the word of God is contained exclusively in the Bible, and that revelation alone is sufficient. This difference is especially manifest as Kierkegaard's address is saturated with biblical proof texts, whereas Reisach never cites the Bible in his argument. On three occasions, he imports biblical phrases (from Matt. 16:18, 1 Tim. 2:2, and Heb. 1:1–2), but he does so in gestures of literary flair only and not as sources of doctrine.

Although some historians of Mormonism in Denmark, such as Jørgen W. Schmidt, who mentions the tract in his Danish Mormon Bibliography (1984),¹³ have long been aware of the existence of Kierkegaard's text, it appears here for the first time in full English translation and for the first time in print since its initial dual publication in 1855. The BYU Library Special Collections obtained a microfilm copy of the book from the New York Public Library in 1965, upon which this translation is based. In his original text, Kierkegaard included several footnotes, which are marked in the translation with Roman numerals and which appear in italics above the rule line. All of the other footnotes, marked with superscript Arabic numerals, have been added by the authors to facilitate understanding of Kierkegaard's text and to address many of the concerns he raises about Mormon doctrine in the course of his remarks. Punctuation has been modernized to standard English, but Kierkegaard's italics and boldface have been retained.

13. Jørgen W. Schmidt, *En dansk mormon bibliografi* (Lyngby, Denmark: Forlaget Moroni, 1984).

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Robb Duffin, Jeffrey Johnson, and Tyler Stoehr, while undergraduates in philosophy at Brigham Young University, each made a very significant contribution to the research and footnote preparation for this project. Funding was generously provided by the following BYU institutions: College of Humanities, Department of Philosophy, Religious Studies Center, and Neal A. Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship.

About and Against Mormonism

By P.[eter] Chr.[istian] Kierkegaard

[Translated by Julie K. Allen¹⁴]

I. A Speech for an Occasion¹⁵

Copenhagen: Published by C. G. Iversen. The Scharling Printing House.
1855 [Reprinted from *Dansk Kirketidende* (Danish Church Times)]

When I discovered last summer that a man in the parish,¹⁶ whose occupation obliged him to travel frequently throughout the area, had, in the course of these journeys outside the parish, been won over by Mormonism, and had therefore immediately offered their speakers his home for their sermons, and that one such meeting was scheduled for Sunday evening, the 13th of August,¹⁷ I also attended and listened for a few hours to their songs and three speakers.¹⁸ I was then given a chance to speak, and what follows is an account of what I said, as memory serves.¹⁹ Over the course

14. This translation has been independently reviewed by Dr. K. Brian Soderquist of the Søren Kierkegaard Research Centre in Copenhagen. We are most grateful for Dr. Soderquist's careful read and helpful suggestions.

15. This subtitle uses a Roman numeral one, but no numeral two appears in the tract.

16. According to Kierkegaard's diary entry for August 1854, the parishioner who hosted the meeting was a cooper named Mathias C. Hemerdt (Hemert), who lived in the village of Haugerup (now Haverup), approximately one mile and a half from Pedersborg, where Kierkegaard served as parish priest for the Danish Lutheran Church. Hemerdt's son-in-law Lars Wilhelmsen had accepted Mormonism in 1852 and presumably introduced his father-in-law to the missionaries. Membership records for the LDS branch in Haugerup show that Mathias and his wife, Christine, were baptized on August 27, 1854, and emigrated to Utah in 1855. Haugerup Branch Record, 1855–59, microfilm, Church Archives, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, 12–13, entries 7 and 8.

17. According to Kierkegaard's diary, he first learned of the LDS missionaries' presence in his parish on August 4, 1854, and the meeting was held on August 13. Kierkegaard, *Journal*, 1850–59, Royal Library, Copenhagen, August 1854.

18. As far as can be determined from mission and branch records, as well as the personal history of the Danish convert Nicolai Sørensen, the missionaries who preached at the meeting were, most likely, twenty-five-year-old Christian Daniel Fjeldsted, C. R. Rasmussen, and Søren Christoffersen, who was serving as president of the local Søndre Overdem Branch in 1854. Haugerup Branch Records 1855–59, 12–13; Jacob F. Sorensen, *History of Jacob Sorensen as Related to His Daughter-in-Law Verna B. Maughan Sorensen*, sorensenfamhistory.org.

19. Kierkegaard was known to write down his speeches after presenting them orally. His remarks from August 13, 1854, were later developed into a formal speech and delivered at schoolhouses in Pedersborg and Kindertofte on October 6, 1854,

of it, I discuss the main points of their presentation. I knew well that, first, these itinerant Mormon preachers are themselves ignorant of their party's actual radical doctrines, so that the whole thing often becomes for them just a sort of revivalist speech without any particular dogmatic content, and that, second, they claim unfamiliarity with the most flagrant Mormon delusions and denounce as lies the evidence from the religious-historical records that demonstrate their errors, thereby causing the common people to develop doubts about such proofs. For these reasons, I decided to strive to challenge only those delusions taught by their sect which the speakers themselves had chosen and publicly presented, and which they thus could neither avoid nor claim to be ignorant of.

I began with a prayer, in which I—conscious of the fact that I had not intruded, neither in the role of teacher nor in this group, for which I was personally responsible since many members of my congregation were present²⁰—called upon the Lord for support to speak, not from or according to flesh and blood or my own weakness, but from the Word and by the power of the Spirit, and concluded my plea with the Lord's Prayer.



Before I express my thoughts about various aspects of those things which have here been “made known by proclamation,” presented according to “the proper principle,” and explained “in complete accord with reason,” I will be so bold as to ask someone among those here present to take this Bible, which I brought with me just in case, to look up, and, if it be required, read out the scriptural passages to which I may refer, in order to point out to me, or at least take notice, if I should cite them incorrectly. The honored speakers who have had the floor thus far did not, as far as I could observe, have occasion to bring out the Bible to which they so frequently referred,

this time formally under the title “Om og mod Mormonismen” (About and Against Mormonism). This speech appeared, under the same title, in the *Dansk Kirketidende* (Danish Church Times) in January and February 1855, and was subsequently reprinted as a small book by C. J. Iversen in the summer of 1855.

20. Since Kierkegaard's parish included most of the villages around Pedersborg and Kindertofte, it is only logical that most of the people attending the cottage meeting would be members of his parish. The personal history of Isaac Sørensen confirms that he and several other members of the Nicolai and Lene Sørensen family, who also lived in Haugerup, were in attendance. See Isaac Sorensen, *History of Isaac Sorensen*, transcribed by Rodney J. Sorensen, July 3–4, 1987, online at sorensenfamhistory.org.

not even to read aloud what is actually written in it. One can easily obtain the appearance of proving by the scriptures whatever is at stake if one dares to be satisfied with occasionally quoting a few random words, which, while the speaker continues on, sound to a casual listener approximately like what is actually found in it [the Bible]. If the Mormon gentlemen have not yet learned this, it does not speak particularly well for either their fundamental insights into the subjects they profess to speak of, nor for their consciences if they know this and still attempt to catch us in such a snare. We shall, therefore, I think, give ourselves a little more time than they did, and examine each point of the case more closely before we look into the many others that follow. The order in which we shall proceed shall be that we first, as a sort of *introduction*,²¹ investigate somewhat more closely *some* of the *secondary claims* that they have just presented. Thereafter, as our *main concern*, we will test the actual *foundation* of their doctrine and touch on some of the central claims of their preaching. Since their honorable defenders have today presented such great quantities of tangible nonsense about specific details, individual elements of the latter points might even be true, as far as that goes. However, these central claims must still submit to being tested, namely by having the things their announcers have proclaimed and emphasized so loudly, which they claim so decisively to speak “according to the promptings of the Spirit,” compared with those things that we know from other sources²² to be the actual common doctrine of their party.

The final speaker said that the Lord himself *declared* that those *sheep* who are *not* “of this fold” should also *hear* the *voice* of the Lord and be gathered into the one fold under the one shepherd—it is this word that was fulfilled when he, “as it has now been made known by proclamation,” after his resurrection in the land of the Jews, went to America and founded his Church among the peoples there. And there would be a degree of sense in this speech if the Lord had said something such as: unto these will I travel. But instead, at the place to which the speaker referred, it reads:

21. All bold type and italics are in Kierkegaard’s original manuscript.

22. By the summer of 1854, the Mormon newspaper in Denmark, *Skandinaviens Stjerne* (The Scandinavian Star), was being published regularly, along with various LDS tracts and pamphlets, so there were many external sources from which Kierkegaard could have gleaned information about LDS doctrine. Although Kierkegaard was familiar with the many anti-Mormon publications then in circulation, he is to be commended for the relatively unprejudiced approach he takes here. He is one of the few Protestant priests (if not the only one) in Denmark at the time to have given serious attention to the doctrines and teachings presented by the Mormon missionaries themselves.

“Them also I must bring” (John 10:16),ⁱ namely, to the sheep of “this fold,” that is, to the Christians of Jewish descent among whom the Lord had already begun to establish his Church.²³ *This* is where the speaker omitted those of the Lord’s words which prove that he did not by any means speak of a trip to America; he omitted them in order to be able to misinterpret the rest without interference. Is this perhaps how he intends to teach us to treat that which he still calls Holy Writ? The speaker stressed further that the usual explanation, by which we understand the sheep of the other fold to be the heathen tribes who are gradually being gathered into the original Church of Jewish Christians, is false in any case, because the Gentiles have never heard the Lord’s voice, and it states in our scripture that “they shall hear my voice”—what else does that prove, than that the speaker is totally unfamiliar with, or refuses to understand the Bible’s language?²⁴ In the Bible, Christian preaching, whether it is done by the apostles of the Lord or their successors, whether it is carried out primarily by trained teachers or by the common confession of the entire Church, is consistently and continually spoken of as the Lord’s own Word

i. Better translated: “lead here” (that is, to the group of former Jews who had gathered around the Lord); it must namely be translated thus, when αγω (“ago”) stands alone in the scriptures of the New Testament, cf. Matthew 21:2, 7; John 7:45, Acts 19:37, 25:6, among others [footnote in original].

23. In his footnote, Kierkegaard seems to be arguing that when αγω (“ago”) is unaccompanied by a prepositional phrase or dative (which is probably what he means by “alone”) it should be translated as “lead here,” which may be true. Among the scriptures he cites, Acts 19:37 is indeed translated in this very fashion in the King James Version, and one could add “here” to ago’s meaning in John 7:45 (though one could argue that the “here” is implied in the previous phrase by the preposition). Acts 25:6 also lends support to Kierkegaard’s argument; however, his citation of Matthew 21:2, 7 does not make much sense because in these verses ago is not “alone” at all. In Matthew 21:2, ago could very well be translated as “lead,” but the “here” is supplied by μοι (“moi”), the dative of the personal pronoun meaning (in this case) “to me.” Furthermore, in Matthew 21:7 one would have to change “here” to “there” in order for the verse to make sense, which is not what Kierkegaard is arguing for.

24. Although Kierkegaard is unimpressed with the missionary’s exegesis of this passage, Kierkegaard does not show that it cannot refer to people everywhere, including scattered Israel. The missionary was using the traditional LDS exegesis of the passage grounded in 3 Nephi 15:21–23:

And verily I say unto you, that ye are they of whom I said: Other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd.

And they understood me not, for they supposed it had been the Gentiles; for they understood not that the Gentiles should be converted through their preaching.

and own Voice.²⁵ “The Word of the Lord is the word which is preached unto you,” wrote the Apostle **Peter** to the churches in the Middle East (1 Pet. 1:25);²⁶ “For from you sounded out the word of the Lord,” wrote **Paul** to the Macedonian Christians (1 Thes. 1:8): in both cases to and about people, who had not had the Lord physically among them. They express themselves thus in accordance with the instructions given by the Lord himself: “He that heareth you heareth me” (Luke 10:16). The Lord himself foresaw the spread of his kingdom to all peoples, though they could not all have him visibly among them, when he testified before the judgment seat of Pilate: “Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice” (John 18:37).ⁱⁱ

We have been informed that, according to Ezekiel 37, the Prophet **Ezekiel** was commanded to take *two pieces of wood* and to write on one: “for Judah and his brethren,” and on the other “*for Joseph* and his brethren.” The latter is understood to be none other than the inhabitants of America, who are descendants of the kingdom of the ten tribes with the exiles of Joseph’s tribe at their head;²⁷ and that is also, as prophecy has led us to expect, why plates were found among these inhabitants of America by **Joseph Smith**. Now, my friends, I shall not delay by proving that the

ii. Another invention of the Mormons, when they want to contest the application of John 10:16 to the incorporation of the heathen peoples into the original, holy universal Church that was founded among and by the Jews, is that the Christians of Gentile descent are never described in scripture as sheep. And yet they are so described both in 1 Peter 2:25 (the fact that said letter is addressed to the Gentile Christians is shown in Nordisk Tidsskrift for christlige Theologi [Nordic Journal of Christian Theology], vol. 1, pages 296–297), and in the reference made there to Isaiah 53:6 (which, according to 52:15, belongs to the same discourse by the prophet, despite the unfortunate chapter division) [footnote in original].

And they understood me not that I said they shall hear my voice; and they understood me not that the Gentiles should not at any time hear my voice—that I should not manifest myself unto them save it were by the Holy Ghost.

25. This idea readily resonates with Latter-day Saints. Doctrine and Covenants 1:38 reads: “What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, and I excuse not myself; and though the heavens and the earth pass away, my word shall not pass away, but shall all be fulfilled, *whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same*” [emphasis added].

26. All scriptures quoted by Peter Christian Kierkegaard have been translated directly from the tract by Julie K. Allen.

27. The Book of Mormon presents the early inhabitants of America not as descendants of the lost ten tribes of Israel, which understanding Kierkegaard ascribes to the missionaries, but rather largely as those of the tribe of Joseph and Judah—Joseph through Lehi and Ishmael, and Judah through Mulek. See 2 Nephi 3:4 and Helaman 6:10.

prophet, who was referred to in the quoted scripture and its corresponding image, foresaw only and alone the abolition of the division that had developed among the people of God since the death of **Solomon** and the days of **Jeroboam**, through the reunification of all true Israelites in that Church which would, after the coming of Christ, hear the voice of the Lord and preserve his testimony. I shall refer only in passing to the account of how the ten tribes are supposed to have made their way to America more than two thousand years ago, and how they fared there, a story which, when it suddenly surfaces now without any trace or report of it having emerged in the time which has elapsed since, comes at least two thousand years too late to be accepted by any reasonable person as history and not rejected as an entirely unwarranted fairy tale. Instead, I will only allow myself the humble request for clarification as to whether it is due to the length of time that has elapsed since said piece of wood was addressed to Joseph and his brethren or to the distance between the Euphrates and America that Joseph Smith was able to rediscover what was originally a piece of wood as a collection of metal plates. If this thing happened by natural causes, one should certainly be able to demonstrate it by referring to other similar transformations, in which case it would be completely understandable that all those people, who, like King **Midas** among the heathens of ancient times, want so much to see everything they touch turn to gold, yearn for America, where presumably even a hazel staff that they happen to bring along can be hammered into plates of ducat gold.²⁸ If, however, the transformation came about by a miracle, then that miracle was particularly unfortunate, since it does not in fact support the doctrine and the revelation, but instead makes it impossible for any reasonable person to recognize **Ezekiel's** notched stick in **Joseph Smith's** stack of plates.²⁹

It was also stated that a segment of *America's original* inhabitants *became black* as a result of their sins. If that is the case, then the poor souls must also have become invisible. The whole thing is reminiscent of

28. Hazel or witch-hazel wood was a preferred material for divining or dowsing rods, and "ducat gold" refers to European gold coins.

29. Common LDS exegesis of Ezekiel 37:16–17 claims that the "stick of Joseph" refers to the Book of Mormon, not to a literal stick that Joseph Smith found or that such a stick somehow turned into the gold plates from which Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon. See 2 Nephi 29:10–13. In a sermon, Joseph Smith stated that The Book of Mormon is "the Stick in the hands of Ephraim." Dean C. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 2 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989–92), 1:307. For a discussion of the joining of the two sticks in an ancient-world context and an understanding of the verse that includes the Book of Mormon, see Hugh Nibley, "The Stick of Judah," in *The Prophetic Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch (Provo, Utah: FARMS; Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 1–48.

a nursery tale told by a peasant, who recounts that some of Eve's children became elves and trolls because she had forgotten to wash them one morning, and therefore tried to convince God that she had no children except those who were clean. As is well known, all of the blacks who now live in America were either brought there from Africa as slaves during the past 350 years, or are the descendents of such Negro slaves; whereas the original inhabitants of America, whom the Europeans found there and of whom there are still significant remnants, are, as everyone knows, at least to ordinary eyes, not at all black, as is attested by the fact that they are often called red men, redskins, etc.³⁰ As to the claim that the group of people who the honored speaker [the Mormon missionary] so boldly blackened have in truth since been *completely eradicated* from the earth as a punishment and warning to the rest of us, that is most likely, although he seems to know nothing of it, the purpose of the account of them in the *Book of Mormon*. But here we encounter once again one of these two-thousand-years-too-recent reports of incredible world events, the effects of which are supposed to have *vanished* entirely *without a trace*; it is as if we find we are dealing with a tale from *1001 Nights*. In order that stories of this kind of portent, which vanish like will-o'-the-wisps³¹ without leaving so much as ashes behind, do not become entirely too ridiculous, they must certainly never be mentioned in proximity to that which not only *contemporary*

30. Although the Book of Mormon does mention the Lord's cursing the Lamanites with "a skin of blackness" (2 Ne. 5:21), elsewhere "dark" or "darkness" is used (Jacob 3:9; Alma 3:6). It is of interest to note that the terms *blackness* and *darkness* are interchangeable in the Hebrew. See Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), 132.

Historically, the understanding of these passages within the Church has never been associated with African Americans. The most common interpretation is that the descendants of the Lamanites are Native Americans. The Book of Mormon also makes it clear that the "curse" of a dark skin can be removed, as is demonstrated by a group of Lamanites whose "skin became white like unto the Nephites" because of their righteousness (3 Ne. 2:15). Furthermore, the LDS Church does not sustain the doctrine, implied by these verses, that there is a direct correlation between skin color and personal righteousness. On the contrary, as Nephi wrote, God "denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female; and he remembereth the heathen; and all are alike unto God, both Jew and Gentile" (2 Ne. 26:33). For a history of Mormon interpretations of race and the Book of Mormon, see Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 41–157.

31. A will-o'-the-wisp is a flickering ball of light seen in swampy areas and marshes that recedes or vanishes if approached. Also known as "fool's fire" or "jack o'lantern," the phenomenon has often been used to describe a misleading illusion.

texts tell us about **Jesus** or even the miracles of **Moses**, but also the things therein that are substantiated by numerous inanimate monuments of all possible kinds, as well as by a continuous, incomprehensibly great chain of mutually corresponding effects in the history of the Jewish and Christian peoples in all places up to the present day, a witness which could not be silenced even if no literature, no architectural ruins or monuments, and no living people remained on the earth.

We have been told that, according to what **John** saw in his revelation, an *angel* should appear with *an eternal gospel*; and that this prophecy was unmistakably fulfilled by **Joseph Smith** and the doctrine that he brought to the kingdoms of the earth. But this fulfillment is more than a little dubious, regardless of whether it is Mr. Joseph Smith himself who is supposed to be the angel spoken of by John or whether one should understand it as referring to the angels who frequently chatted with him in one corner of America or another. For, as any of us can confirm, John's angel flies in the midst of heaven or directly under heaven (Rev. 14:6), a description that applies thus far neither to Smith nor to his angels. Nor does it help a great deal that the honored speaker uses the occasion to position himself alongside Joseph Smith, just as in the Revelation of John the first angel is followed by another, who said, "**Babylon** is fallen, that great city" (Rev. 14:8), in that he [the missionary] also "proclaims" quite loudly for us that Babel has fallen. Not all trumpet blasts have the effect of those that thundered from the trumpets of the tabernacle when they destroyed the walls of Jericho at the Lord's command (Josh. 6); and though Babel will certainly fall when said angel proclaims it, that does not mean that everyone who trumpets out those words will become either an angel or the conqueror of Babel. "For the kingdom of God is not in word, but in power," said the prophet **Paul** (1 Cor. 4:20); and just as one does not become a prophet of the Lord simply by donning a sheepskin coat (Matt. 7:15; cf. Zech. 13:4; 2 Kgs. 1:8), neither can one become an angel of the Lord by attempting to borrow wings from the visions and language of the Spirit in the Revelation of John.

God has a *body*,³² said the same speaker; and on this occasion he blended truth and falsehood so completely together that the whole thing has begun to ferment and become completely indigestible. Yes, God certainly has a

32. The LDS position is best summed up by a statement from the Doctrine and Covenants: "The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. Were it not so, the Holy Ghost could not dwell in us" (130:22). For a discussion of the development of the Mormon understanding of the embodiment of God, see David L. Paulsen, "The Doctrine of Divine Embodiment: Restoration, Judeo-Christian, and Philosophical Perspectives," *BYU Studies* 35, no. 4 (1995–96): 6–94.

physical body, for God is both the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit; and since the Son became a man and was resurrected from the dead, then of course he did not reclaim his physical body from death in order to put it aside ever again. He ascended to heaven with it, he reigns with it in the glory of Godhood up above, and he shall come again with it to judge the living and the dead, for it has been written that the disciples saw him be taken up and that the angels testified for them that he would come again as they saw him ascend (Acts 1:9–11); indeed, both prophets and apostles have foreseen that all people shall see him whom they have pierced (Zech. 12:10; John 19:37; and Rev. 1:7).³³ But although the truth of this is apparent to everyone who believes in him, it must, on the other hand, be assiduously differentiated from the doctrine which was just presented, which claims to assign either to God the Father or the Trinity a divine body of his own, as eternal as his essence, the model for Adam's body. When such a claim is supported by the assertion that God manifested himself in the flesh several times prior to the birth of Christ, to Abraham, to Moses, etc., it is only the result of gross ignorance of that which the scriptures plainly teach, that the Father is revealed not only in the Son (John 1:18; 1 Tim. 6:16), but also that he truly revealed himself to the patriarchs through him as his eternal Word (John 1:1–14), the brightness of his glory (Heb. 1:3), the angel of his presence (Isa. 63:9), and spoke with Moses face to face, as a man speaketh to his neighbor (Ex. 33:11; Num. 12:8), yea, though even Moses could not bear the *full* sight of his glory and let all his goodness pass before him, so that Moses saw his back parts (Ex. 33:18–34:8).³⁴ Yet the fact that the claim made today cites for support the word of the Lord to **Philip**: “He that hath seen me hath seen the Father” (John 14:9), makes it seem almost like a test that had been administered in order to determine whether we here are not listening and speaking in our sleep. For it must be immediately apparent to those of us who are awake that this scripture shows that the Father has no divine body of his own, for it is here that we hear the Lord explain precisely this matter: it was incorrect when Philip said, “Shew us the Father,” and imagined thereby that he could be seen physically in another way than the apostles had already

33. Latter-day Saints would agree with all of what Kierkegaard says here about Christ's physical body. Where they disagree is Kierkegaard's attribution of *that* body to all three members of the Trinity.

34. Latter-day Saints believe that it was Jesus Christ who, in his pre-incarnate (but still material) humanlike form, visited the ancient prophets, thus making the missionaries' supposed argument here a *non sequitur* even from a believer's perspective. As Jesus himself says in Ether 3:16, a short few years after the Tower of Babel spoken of in Genesis 11:1–8: “Behold, this body, which ye now behold, is the body of my spirit; and man have I created after the body of my spirit; and even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh.”

seen him, namely in the Son. It does not state *there*, as this new doctrine claims, that he who has seen God in the flesh has seen an image very similar to that of the Father, but that one such has seen the Father, who is therefore not physically visible except precisely in the Son.³⁵

My predecessor in this discussion said that there are now almost 600 *different parties*, all of whom call themselves Christians; this already demonstrates sufficiently the magnitude of the apostasy, the downfall of the Church, and the necessity of joining the “Latter-day Saints” instead of such a Babel. Well, yes, then, to each his own. For then there will be—since the gentlemen also desire to be considered Christians—hereafter 601 parties, each of which cries out: No, this is the way; no, salvation is to be found here. And then the next heresy which may arise in the future will be able to argue just as these gentlemen have done.³⁶ Its spokesmen will once again say that the confusion of Babylon has come to the 601 sects, so that one ought to flee from them to us, for we are the lattermost Saints with the most recent wisdom—namely Number 602. For my part, I cannot help but think that it is nonsense to begin by attempting to prove that Christianity has failed, on the basis of the fact that there are numerous parties who are in disagreement and yet all wish to be counted as Christian, and then to endorse a new party, which is also in disagreement with all of the others and which also wishes to be counted as Christian. Moreover, I cannot understand at all what is supposedly proved against *true* Christianity by the multiplicity of contesting parties, all of which claim to be Christian and cannot of course all be such. Or were there perhaps no *false* Christians and heretical groups in the days of the apostles—though the apostles themselves refer to them in their writings, excommunicate them, and

35. In a letter to editor John Wentworth of the *Chicago Democrat*, Joseph Smith stated, “I was enwrapped in a heavenly vision, and saw two glorious personages, who exactly resembled each other in features.” One reading of this detail is that God and Jesus do have physical bodies that are identical, or at least so identical the young boy was unable to make a distinction between the two. The question remains, however, if the Danish missionaries were aware of this account or not. See “First Vision” in Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon, eds., *Encyclopedia of Joseph Smith’s Teachings* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000), 266–67.

36. While this point may sound like an odd one for a Protestant to make, understanding Kierkegaard’s support of the prominent nineteenth-century Danish Reformist priest N. F. S. Grundtvig makes this point less self-condemning. According to Grundtvig, the eternal Church is not sustained by any succession in priestly authority or purity of teaching, but rather by an oral tradition which binds contemporary believers to the original oral traditions established by Christ and perpetuated by the Apostles, as found particularly in the Apostles’ Creed, into a single, universal church.

warn against them? Was it not for precisely this reason that the Church was founded and true Christianity established on the earth? Or is there perhaps no honest man left on earth, since it is notorious that nearly all heretics want to be considered honest? Are there no more virtuous maidens simply because many of those we call by such a title during the marriage ceremony are neither maidens nor virtuous? In short, the fact that there are many parties, which, while disagreeing amongst themselves, each individually claim to belong to or represent the Church of the Lord, proves only that one must not blindly accept everyone as a Christian or a teacher of Christianity who claims to be such and who rejects the teachings of others, for in these two things must the false preachers, if they do not wish to start warning against themselves, speak precisely the same as those who preach the incontrovertible truth. But if one must be wary of confiding in someone simply because he proclaims himself to be a teacher of the only true Christianity, then there is most likely no one in whom one should have *less cause* to confide than such teachers, who come and go like migratory birds and who send their disciples on long journeys to far corners of the earth almost before they can properly learn the new doctrine with more than their ears and tongues. For precisely such people will do everything in their power to prevent others from judging them “by their fruits”:³⁷ one can thus understand the word of the Lord in Matthew 7:16 as applying either to their own conduct, when the temptation sometimes becomes too strong for them and the sheepskin is too short to conceal the wolf claws, or to the obvious and unmistakable effects of their teaching in larger circles, where others faithfully accept and preserve it. Therefore, the more they encourage crossing the great desert to **Utah**, where the temple is being erected and where the Lord will reveal himself one of these days, the more clearly well-taught Christians must remember the Lord’s words about false preachers: “When they say that Christ is in the desert, do not

37. Kierkegaard may be referring obliquely to publicized charges of polygamous behavior among Danish converts, but in fact no evidence of any socially unacceptable behavior is recorded. Instead, most accounts portray the missionaries and their converts as leading quite Christian lives, suffering persecution without retaliation. According to Sørensen, the chief of police in Aalborg, Denmark, had to rescind an order banning Mormon meetings because he could not demonstrate any damage to the “civil order and common morality” brought about by these meetings. Sørensen, *Rejsen til Amerikas Zion. Den danske Mormonudvandring før århundredeskiftet* [The Journey to America’s Zion: The Danish Mormon Emigration Prior to the Turn of the Century], 30.

The publicized charges of polygamy among Mormons converts in Denmark were made by Dr. H. C. Rørdam in 1852. H. C. Rørdam, “Contribution to Information about the Mormons,” *Dansk Kirketidende*, April 9, 1854.

follow them there, and when they say that he is in the chambers, then do not believe it" (Matt. 24:23–26); the more we must, of course, realize that since the Second Coming of the Lord will be, according to his own promise, as the light which radiates from the East and shines into the West (Matt. 24:27), those who follow "the Star of the West" to meet him first have been falsely informed. But the more they flaunt great names, claiming that that which they speak is sheer inspiration from the "Spirit"; that it is sheer love, similar to the Savior's in its deep intensity, with which they, like the honored speaker, impart to us their touching assurances in the midst of their humility; that "apostles and prophets" will soon be found at each train station: yes, all the more are we of course reminded that it is not by humble names and poor appellations (such, for example, as priests or chaplains), but rather as apostles and prophets that the Lord and his apostles taught us to recognize the *proud* host of false teachers (Matt. 24:11, 24; 2 Cor. 11:13; Rev. 2:20); that there are many *false* spirits (1 John 4:1ff); and that if anyone bears witness of *himself*, his witness is not true (John 5:31), with the exception of the Lord, who was both able and required to bear witness of himself as of everything, because he alone is the living Truth (John 8:13; cf. 14:6), but who, for our sake, also condescended to quote the testimony of others (John 5:32–34).

At this point, we must conclude our discussion of some of the more isolated inaccuracies and absurdities which we have heard this evening from the three preceding speakers, especially the last, who clearly intended to hit the nail on the head, while the other two had attempted, by means of some not too terribly distorted elements of the common doctrine of sin and mercy, to prepare us for the great news that he would bring. We will now proceed to the *consideration* of the *central claims* by which the "new principles" of these gentlemen and their teachers must stand and fall, and which they would therefore be unable, such as they might possibly dare to do with this or that of the previous topics, to apologize for or discount as minor mistakes that they had happened to make during the course of their speeches and which are not relevant to the doctrine itself in any way.

Their *central claims* are, *first*, as has been vigorously discussed here, that the *Church of the Lord*, which he founded among the Jewish people in the olden days, and in which and for which his apostles lived and worked, no longer exists. It is not to be found within the so-called Christianity that now exists on earth, but rather *vanished* many hundreds of years ago. The last honored speaker phrased it more forcefully than was necessary even from his standpoint when he taught us that this Church of the Lord had disappeared at the time of the "destruction of the apostles," for which he blamed the "popes." But even discounting this rather amusing mistake, by which the popes, that is, the Roman bishops with a commonly

acknowledged final authority over the affairs of the Church and a secular power derived from and corresponding to this, arrive rather precipitously on the scene of world history approximately five or six hundred years earlier than they are otherwise detectable there; and discounting the equally suspicious nature of this most recent bit of information, according to which it must be the earliest bishops in Rome after the days of the Apostles, who had until now been considered the friends of the apostles (**Linus**, cf. 2 Tim. 4:21; **Anacletus, Clement**, cf. Philip. 4:3), who, in all secrecy, without it even being suspected by anyone until the arrival of the Mormons, succeeded in convincing Emperor **Nero** or his officials to have **Peter** and **Paul** killed as martyrs in Rome—discounting, as I said, these proofs of what happens when one lets one’s mouth direct one’s thoughts instead of the thoughts the mouth, and when one who could perhaps be an attentive listener prefers instead to be a confused teacher: then there can be no remaining doubt that the claim that the Lord’s Church disappeared many centuries ago is both part of the **Mormon doctrine** and *indispensable* to them if they are to make any progress and convert anyone who is not ignorant and thoughtless to an incredible degree. The central cornerstone of the new wisdom, which currently comes to us from America, the claim that the Lord’s Church has vanished, is, curiously enough, *nearly* as *old* as the holy universal Church itself; nearly all heretics depend upon it and it has been proclaimed to us as an explicit doctrine by nearly every heretical group through the procession of centuries. “That Church, which was the universal one,” we learn in its fourth century from **Augustine**, “no longer exists, namely according to those who are outside it.” Already a hundred and fifty years earlier it had been proclaimed by one of the many companies of heretics whose names begin with M,ⁱⁱⁱ namely among the **Manichees**, that the holy universal Church had perished even earlier than our exalted speaker here dared to estimate its demise, that it had namely perished the day our Lord ascended to heaven, in that even his Apostles, these “spiritless Galileans,” had already misunderstood his teachings and the order of salvation in essentially all aspects. So, the talk of the disappearance of the Lord’s Church from the earth is *quite old*; and why should it not be? Did he not foretell with certainty that his disciples would suffer the same fate as he himself (John 15:20)? And was not the first event following his ordination to his ministry, when the Spirit descended upon his head on the banks of the Jordan, that the Tempter stood by him and whispered: “Are *you* God’s Son? No, that is just empty talk and the wild fantasy of your mind.” When throughout the rest of the Lord’s subsequent ministry on the earth, the accusation that he was not who he is and who he claims to be (John 8:24, 25; cf. Luke 22:67–71) was his

iii. Montanists, Manichees, (Monophysites, Monothelites), Mohammedans, Mennonites, Mormons [footnote in original].

constant companion until it triumphantly pointed its finger at him as he hung between two thieves (Matt. 27:39–44): how could it be otherwise than that his Church would be tested by the same fate? How can it then surprise us when the Church, already on the day of its anointing, that is, when the Spirit descended on the little group on Pentecost, and the universal Church was *exemplarily* completely present while the apostles spoke in all the tongues of the heathens,^{iv} must hear whispers (Acts 2:13) that the whole thing was false excitement and ill-timed intoxication?³⁸ Thus we must find it all the more understandable; just as when the Church later, through nearly all of its generations, must study the words of the Psalmist: I am peaceful, but when I open my mouth (that is, with the good news) (cf. 1 Tim. 6:13; Rom. 10:10; Mark 8:38), they are prepared for war (Ps. 120:7); and when it must thus hear evil, not just from them who openly hate its Lord, but also from those who, with hypocritical minds and treasonous thoughts, pretend to be his and, as such, proclaim, “See, here is the Christ, or look there (Matt. 24:5, 23), for the Church, which was universal, is no more.”

The above-mentioned accusation that the Church, which the Lord himself established in days of old, has long since dwindled and been destroyed, is, as we can see, an old affair. However, the more the claim itself appears to have the stamp of permanence, such that it will certainly never completely be silenced on earth until the Lord comes again in his father’s glory and fulfills his promise to lead the bride, who is the Church itself, home to the great bridal feast (Matt. 22:2ff; Rev. 19:7ff; 21:2, 9ff; cf. John 3:29; Eph. 5:25–27): the more, on the other hand, is the mark of corruption of the truthful account impressed upon *all those* who lend their voices to its support and find comfort in it. Proving that **Montanists**,³⁹

iv. For a correct account of the Pentecost miracle, in contrast to quite widespread misrepresentations, see Nordisk Tidsskrift for christlige Theologi, vol. 4, page 43f and pages 50–55 [footnote in original].

38. Kierkegaard’s claim here about the importance of Pentecost again reflects his Grundtvigian position. If sacred truths are to be communicated orally, then the day of Pentecost, with its use of all the languages of the heathens (and hence its disposition into different oral traditions the gospel truth) must stand as the supreme culmination of Christian preaching.

39. The Montanists were followers of an early Christian sect, named for its founder, Montanus, dating originally to the second century AD. Montanism was deemed heretical by the early church because of its unorthodox teachings and practices, such as encouraging speaking in tongues (glossolalia), believing in immediate revelation from the Spirit and allowing its prophecies to supersede those of the Apostles, and proclaiming immediate eschatological expectations. See Kurt Aland, “Montanism,” in Lindsay Jones, ed., *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 15 vols., 2d ed. (Detroit: Macmillan Reference USA, 2005), 9:6167–68.

Manichees,⁴⁰ **Mohammedans, Cathars,**⁴¹ **Quakers,**⁴² and whatever else the other sects which have arisen after the establishment of the Church are called, were *not* founded by Jesus Christ and do not represent his people on earth is a difficult task and is, as a rule, *not often nor consistently* attempted. Nor is it necessary when the spiritual darkness is not too great; for they obviously lack both the original connection with the Lord and attempt in vain to pass over the centuries which lie between their founding and his departure from the earth. Moreover, time's trial by fire always goes against them, for not one of them has been able to maintain itself *by spiritual* power and *as a spiritual force* for even just a few centuries. Their names would be largely forgotten if the original, now eighteen-hundred-year-old, universal Church did not remember them for the sake of the battles it has fought against them. By contrast, the fundamental aim of all sects and sect founders, their first and last word, is to assert that they are *the only* people and kingdom which can trace their descent from the days of the Lord and his Apostles without blatant self-contradiction and lies, [and] that all those whose faith and whose baptism no one has yet been able to prove to be different from that of **Peter and Paul and John and Irenaeus**⁴³ and **Augustine**

40. The Manichees were followers of the ancient religion of Manichaeism, founded in the third century AD by the prophet Mani, who lived in Babylon (at this time, a province of Persia). Manichees adopted a dualistic view of the universe and saw the conflicts of the earth as a clash between the realm of light and the realm of darkness. See Gherardo Gnoli, "Manichaeism: An Overview," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 8:5650–59.

41. The Cathars, also known as Albigensians after a region in France in which many Cathars lived, contested what they saw as corruption within the Catholic Church, believed in a Gnostic duality of matter and spirit, and sought to live a "pure" life, their name coming from the Greek *καθαροί* ("katharoi"), meaning "pure ones." They rejected the Old Testament as God's word and subscribed to a strong antimaterialistic worldview, having as a prime goal the liberation of the soul from the body. See Gordon Leff, "Cathari," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 3:1456–58.

42. Quakers are members of the Religious Society of Friends, founded in seventeenth-century England by George Fox. Quakers teach that every person is able to individually recognize and follow the inner witness of the Light of God. Thus, they believe that access to God is available equally to everyone without the mediation of a paid clergy or the performance of outward sacraments. As such, they have tended to avoid hierarchy and creeds, while striving to live simple, honest, nonviolent, and egalitarian lifestyles. See Hugh Barbour, "Quakers," in *Encyclopedia of Religion*, 11:7546–50.

43. A work by Irenaeus, bishop of Lyon in the second century AD, entitled *Against Heresies*, served as the inspiration for Grundtvig's conception of the primacy of the confession of faith and oral transmission of doctrine as the foundations of Christianity, which then became the cornerstones of Grundtvigian

and **Ansgar**⁴⁴ and **Luther** and us, are *not, in fact*, the Lord's people but only pretend to be such over the grave of the real Church. And yet, in their confusion and obduracy and without themselves knowing or desiring it, *they themselves* function *as witnesses* for the Church's unbroken existence. The founders of each sect, though they otherwise condemn their predecessors and are condemned by those who come after them, consistently repeat the claim the Lord's Church has perished and use all of the tricks at their disposal to prove this claim once and for all. When considered in the light of Truth, however, this claim is nothing more than an *unwilling admission* that an old building still stands firmly on the spot that they would so dearly like to call an abandoned lot and that this building is precisely the reason that their own new buildings cannot be located anywhere else than the air. It is only therefore that they all insist, despite disagreement among themselves, on the illegitimacy of historical Christianity, because they realize, or at least sense, that *history's witness* of the Christian people, their faith, and their confession, testifies against them and against that which they would like to present as the true divine doctrine "according to the proper principles." The members of these sects—like the false witnesses who testified against the Lord (Mark 14:56–59), and like essentially all false witnesses—are *completely incapable* of *reconciling* the differences in their testimony about the Church's supposed destruction; for some claim the Church collapsed upon the Lord's departure, others with "the destruction of the apostles," others in the fourth, seventh, or eleventh century, and so on, ad infinitum. These discrepancies should serve as an involuntary testimony to every impartial person that the Church has been neither verifiably nor recognizably destroyed, and for every enlightened Christian as a sign that these dissenters believe just as little in the historical Christ (he who came in the flesh) as in the holy universal Church.

I would also like to attempt a refutation of the claim in question from other perspectives as well, which will perhaps be more comprehensible to many of my listeners. At least this much is—I hope I dare assume—clear to every one of you, that it causes our reverence for the Lord to suffer, or, more correctly, *destroys our faith* in him *if* we let ourselves be seduced into believing that the Church that he founded has been *destroyed*. Already in Old Testament times, the Lord asked, "What could have been done more

theology. See F. J. Billeskov Jansen, *Grundtvig og Kierkegaard* (Copenhagen: C. A. Reitzel, 1996), 54.

44. Ansgar lived from 801 to 865 and served as the archbishop of Hamburg-Bremen. "The Apostle of the North," as he was known, was charged with and primarily responsible for bringing Christianity to Scandinavia.

to my vineyard, that I have not done in it?" (Isa. 5:4). That is precisely why neither the ancient covenant nor its people could perish; instead, they are both fulfilled by and transformed into the New Covenant and its people in the fullness of time (cf. Matt. 5:17, 18, and Rom. 11:16–32, as well as Acts 3:25–26). But for this latter people, for the Church that the Lord raised up by his hand from among the Jews and Gentiles, for the vineyard therefore (cf. Matt. 20:1ff), whose countless branches and shoots all ultimately derive from and are connected to the one true vine (John 15:1ff), even with the Tree of Life in the renewed Paradise—for this same vineyard God the Father was able to do more than for the first, as it is written that he said, "What shall I do? I will send my beloved Son" (Luke 20:13), and that he truly sent him, who calls himself and is in fact both the Way and the Truth and the Life (John 14:6), and sent him in the likeness of sinful flesh and as a sacrifice for sin (Rom. 8:3), for the purpose of sanctifying all those who are of the Truth (John 3:16; 5:24; 18:37). And *how* could it be *possible*, if we thus believe in the Son, seriously to pursue the thought and consider it for a few moments to be reasonable or tolerable, that the kingdom which he thus founded should have *perished* or could perish, even if the heavens and the earth were destroyed, much less before that, much less after the passage of a few generations or a paltry few centuries? How could we abandon the ancient faith, which is the remnant of the consciousness of divinity in the hearts of men, even among the most degenerate peoples on earth, when the truth, even as it is older than the first lie, shall thus also survive the most recent lie and have the last word, when all those mouths that speak falsehoods have been stopped (Ps. 63:11)? Or should we, on the other hand, attempt to persuade ourselves and others that all of the generations which have lived between the days of the ancient Church or even the days of the apostles and Joseph Smith's and our time, among whom the name of Jesus has been called upon and the Trinity has been worshipped, have been nothing but purely hypocrites and liars, since the kingdom of the Lord, whose voice shall be heard by all those who are of the Truth, has been gone from the earth all that time, throughout twelve or seventeen centuries, because there was not in all that time consistently even two or three who were joined in his name (Matt. 18:20)? Or is there another way out: is there really anyone who can find a tolerable purpose, let alone peace, in the conviction that our Savior was indeed the Son of God, as omnipotent and eternal as the Father and sent by him to the earth to confound the deeds of the devil (1 Jn. 3:8), that he in fact as part of his mission announced and founded a self-proclaimed kingdom of God, a kingdom of truth on earth (Mark 1:15; John 18:36–37) for the inheritance of eternal life (John 3:16), that he truly would invite all men to enter into it through repentance and faith

(Luke 24:44–47), such that none would be excluded, neither of those peoples who did not see him but must necessarily believe in him through the words of others (John 17:20): and that thus all these great institutions and marvelous prospects should have disappeared, in order that, for example, the kingdom that the princes of this world founded at approximately the same time in Rome under **Augustus** and **Tiberius**, could last longer and be understood with greater justification to be an eternal kingdom than that which was founded by such a divine being, and of which it was already prophesied by the prophets that it should neither be eternally corrupted nor left to other people (Dan. 2:44)? I seem to recall that all three of the honored speakers expressed many things about their *profound simplicity*, upon which they base their claim to the right to be heard and believed more than the rest of us, whom they—and not we ourselves—quickly identified on the same occasions as the wise and clever ones, from whom God, in his wisdom, according to the testimony of the Lord himself and the Apostle Paul, has supposedly concealed the mysteries of the kingdom of God (Matt. 11:25; 1 Cor. 1:18–29). All three of them continued to keep so closely to the same course that not one of them explained in any detail about the simplicity in which they are so advanced, which explains at least in part why they overlooked the fact that the Lord, in the scripture they cited, does not speak of “simpletons” but of “babes.”⁴⁵ It is not, therefore, impossible that their concept of simplicity contains the key to much of that which they teach, as well as to the certainty with which they teach it, and that this same simplicity consists of *never* thinking a thought *completely through* [to its conclusion]; therefore, they do not easily notice, let alone become concerned by, the most illogical train of thought and its apparent self-contradictoriness. But however much this can serve to explain their thought processes, it does not serve to recommend them to people who must think, as I at least do, that those who are truly “babes” are those who have a childlike trust in the Lord’s Word (cf. Matt. 18:4; John 5:41), and that the truly “simple” are those who seek for the only needful thing with an undivided heart and therefore also with an unprejudiced view (cf. Luke 10:42 and Matt. 6:21–24 in the text), as well as that

45. Although *nepios* is translated as “babes” in Matthew 11:25, the most common use of the word in Greek literature is “infant.” However, *nepios* can also mean “childlike,” “innocent,” and “foolish,” in Greek texts including the New Testament. The New English Bible translates *nepios* as “simple.” Therefore, in regard to the meaning of Matthew 11:25 and 1 Corinthians 1:18–29, the missionaries’ interpretation is defensible. See Gerhard Kittel, ed., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, 10 vols., trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1967), 4:912–23.

such people, precisely because they remain in his Word, which is the truth, also understand the truth and are made free by it, and also free from all of the self-contradictions to be found in anyone who serves lies (cf. John 8:31, 32). The oddest aspect of this inauthentic simplicity, which can tolerate the thinking and preaching of things which, by the standards of every simple human thought, directly contradict and mutually exclude each other, such that they could not possibly both be true, is that, when we encounter this simplicity in such teachers, as tonight, if I recall all three presentations correctly, they claim that everything they teach “agrees absolutely with reason.” As anyone can easily recognize, this issue thus becomes, regarding Mormon preaching as a whole and particularly their doctrine of the Apostasy, essentially as follows: Do we consider it to be unreasonable and self-contradictory to believe in the only begotten Son of the Eternal Father, who will come in the fullness of time in order to establish an eternal kingdom of truth and mercy here on earth among the fallen people, and then to claim that this same kingdom perished long ago, long before the earth and the generation from which it was to gather its subjects would perish? We are told that we should be simple and not have any dealings with the wisdom of the wise, but rather to keep our human reason captive to the obedience of faith, which means here: attempt to believe yea and nay about the same matter. But if it occurs to us to raise the small question of why we actually should believe the Mormons and not anyone else who might want to train us to think nonsensical thoughts and self-contradictions, then the answer is: because the doctrines of the Mormons are completely in harmony with reason in all aspects, and therefore free from self-contradictions, agreeing in every particular with every other and in its entirety—that is, then, the same doctrine, which a moment before rejected the involvement of reason as utterly unjustified, which a moment earlier did not want to be tested by the standard of reason but rather be believed as self-contradictory *despite reason*, now wants to be believed *because it is reasonable in each and every way*.⁴⁶

It is therefore *self-contradiction*, as I have just illuminated comprehensively, not just to claim that the Church of Christ has been eradicated from the earth, since its obvious opponents can convince themselves and

46. Kierkegaard’s challenge here is pertinent, not just for the Latter-day Saints but for every other religion that professes to be an advocate of both reason and faith. Latter-day Saints have, both historically and recently, claimed that their doctrines are in accordance with reason and logic, while at the same time admitting that certain doctrines or practices defy rational explanation. Elder Neal A. Maxwell acknowledged reason, experience, and revelation as three legitimate

each other of that without any real proof or valid reason, though occasionally with the appearance of such and in any case without direct self-contradiction, but to make *such claims* and still *desire to be* a Christian, still want to believe in him as the true God and a real human being, the Savior of the world, the founder of the kingdom of God and thereby the receiver of all those who will come to him and let themselves be saved by him, but therefore also the judge who will ultimately condemn those who did not want to believe in him (John 3:18, 19; 12:46–48, cf. 2 Thes. 1:8, 2:10). And yet our Mormon guides would have us believe all this. *In every way*, they lead one down a *false path*. For if that, which we just saw to be unverifiable, were verifiable, that his Church has vanished long ago from the earth, then there would apparently be only one counsel to give all of us, namely that we must not put our trust in him, either for time or for eternity. It is said quite correctly, “As the man is, so is his strength” (Judg. 8:21), and thus are his works. Therefore, if his works have been, as far as their tasks and goals are concerned, recognizably ordained to last until the end of days, and have nevertheless succumbed to the forces against which its founder intended it to contend, and over which he claims to have attained a decisive victory

ways of knowing, declaring that “The Latter-day Saint leader seeks for the intelligent inter-play of reason, experience, and inspiration—a triad of resources—as ways of knowing, as ways of acquiring full information on which he will base his decision-making.” Neal A. Maxwell, “A More Excellent Way”: *Essays on Leadership for Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 71. Earlier in the same volume, Elder Maxwell wrote the following:

Reason has these distinct advantages: it can transcend the inevitably limited individual experience; it can checkrein false inspiration; it permits us to use and build on the experiences, testimonies, and insights of others; it makes vicarious learning possible; it permits us to extrapolate from great books and the scriptures for our own lives. Obviously, the Lord intends that we develop our powers of reason. In the Doctrine and Covenants, Section 9, verse 8, he stresses the need for each of us to “study it out in your mind.” In Section 45 he speaks about his intent to “show unto you my strong reasoning.” However, reason has some distinct limitations: reason by itself is not able to transcend our native wisdom and intelligence; sometimes reason is applied to skimpy data; often reason rests on false premises which can be very misleading; reason, unfortunately, at times, is divorced from feeling; reason can become an end in itself and people can come to worship the process of logic in a kind of “adoration of the human mind.” (69–70)

Thus, while reason does offer us certain advantages and benefits, it might be advisable for Latter-day Saints to consider carefully Kierkegaard’s criticism before claiming that all LDS religious assertions rest exclusively on a reasonable foundation.

(John 12:31, 32; 19:30): then it is unmistakably not him on whom we should depend to build securely and travel safely through life. Naturally, someone who is otherwise seriously concerned with an immovable truth and an eternal comfort and can, in a spiritual sense, count to five, can hardly be satisfied and soothed by the Mormon wisdom, offered to us here tonight, that the same Church that Christ personally established disappeared at the same time as the “destruction of the apostles,” that is to say more than 1700 years ago, but has been renewed and restored a quarter of a century ago by **Joseph Smith** in America. Already at this point in our investigation, it is namely easy enough to see that if the work of the *Divine Human* is supposed to have vanished after the passing of a few human generations because of the corrupt world’s violence and deceit, then S.T.⁴⁷ Mr. **Joseph Smith’s** restoration of the same—which is still under development, insofar as it is perpetually receiving a changing order of salvation by new revelations—cannot expect, with the least reasonableness or probability, greater duration in its uncorrupted form than at the most a few months, unless Smith is to be depicted as something even higher than God’s only begotten Son, which would be both exceedingly unreasonable and blasphemous.

Thus it stands, when the matter is considered in *general terms*, with our new prophets’ revival of the old talk about the *Church* as long since *dead and buried*, and the entirely new report which they connect to the former supposition that the spirit and true nature of the dearly departed—supposedly in accordance with the theory that was famous in its day that the cemetery is the place “where our immortal souls will be buried in the womb of the earth”—has been exhumed in our day in the form of shining metal plates. They are forced to pile contradiction upon contradiction in their attempt to differentiate between those things that are inseparably united in our childhood teachings and the common confession of the Church: faith in the historical *Savior*, who was crucified by **Pilate** and resurrected, and in the uninterrupted effective *presence* of the *Holy Spirit* in the *holy, universal Church*, which is historically connected to the *Savior* until the end of the progression of the world. It is equally impossible truly to reconcile what they claim to accept from the scriptures about the person and works of Christ with what they teach about their own doctrine of the downfall of his kingdom, because the world murdered his apostles just as it had murdered him himself. It is just as impossible to bring these

47. S.T. is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *Salvo Titulo*, an expression used when the speaker wishes to refer politely to someone whose title he does not know, demonstrating both Kierkegaard’s command of Latin and his determination to resist the temptation of allowing his remarks to deteriorate into mudslinging.

positions into agreement as it would be to follow **Baron von Münchhausen's**⁴⁸ famous recommendation of climbing from here to the moon on a rope woven of chaff, which can be cut off below as it is tied on up above. But what shall we therefore think of such a doctrine, *especially* when we notice that the Lord, according to everything that is known about him and his work, must not just necessarily lose all credibility, if the kingdom of God which he founded has ever vanished from the earth, but also that he himself, precisely under the designation “congregation” or “church,” *expressly* and *emphatically* promised the congregation of his faithful *uninterrupted continuance* here on earth? “Thou art the rock”—thus he spake to **Peter** in ancient days, as is clearly stated in one of the Gospels with which our distinguished speakers “are in complete agreement”—“and upon this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it” (Matt. 16:18).⁴⁹ And these words of the Lord can in *no way*, as the Mormon gentlemen would certainly immediately attempt to explain, either exclusively or even primarily, be understood as referring to the assembly of the saints above, or that which we generally and accurately call the *triumphant Church*. Its members are namely done with death once and for all (Heb. 9:27), and where their hymns of praise can be heard, there

48. Baron von Münchhausen is a fictional character in several collections of stories from the late eighteenth century, which recount his impossible exploits and adventures. The character is based on a German nobleman, Karl Friedrich Hieronymus (1720–97), who served in the Russian military and entertained his friends by telling tall tales of traveling to the moon, riding cannonballs, and moving castles with the aid of a hot-air balloon. For example, see Gottfried August Bürger et al., *Die wunderbaren Reisen und Abenteuer des Freiherrn von Münchhausen* (Zurich: Nord-Süd Verlag, 1977).

49. The verse here quoted by Kierkegaard does not assert that the original Church was immune to apostasy. In fact, the verse itself is ambiguous in that *autes* could be referring to either “this rock” (*taute te petra*) or “the Church” (*ten ekklesian*), both of which nouns are feminine and would, therefore, correspond with the pronoun. This raises a very interesting exegetical issue because the case could be made that in Matthew 16:18 the Lord was not referring to the Church at all but to the rock itself, a popular view among Latter-day Saints. Joseph Smith explained, “Jesus in His teachings says, ‘Upon this rock I will build my Church, and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it.’ What rock? Revelation.” Furthermore, the doctrine of apostasy does not mean that the Lord speaks to his children only when His Church is on the earth. On the contrary, LDS leaders have taught that “God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation, either in this life or in the life to come.” Joseph Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1976), 274, and “Statement of the First Presidency regarding God’s Love for All Mankind,” February 15, 1978.

death is no more (Rev. 20:14; 21:4). It cannot, therefore, as is the case in the gentlemen's arguments of which we are speaking here, be presented as endangered and struggling against the might of the kingdom of death. That can *only* be said of that which has been appropriately dubbed the *militant Church*, the union of the Lord's disciples in the contemporary world. It is those, therefore, whose society and church the Lord is most likely speaking of when he foresees combat and victory for "His Church," despite all the efforts and power of the kingdom of death. And in accordance with the same, the Lord speaks in the same place about building his Church on *faith and confession*, that is, the faith which **Peter** himself had received power to proclaim by grace and which thus became in his heart and mouth the rock of righteousness, for which reason the Lord called him his rock (cf Matt. 16:16, 17).^v For it must be well known unto all believers that this same faith, inasmuch as we, with God's help, enter into the triumphant congregation, *hereafter shall* among all of us *be replaced* by its dual fruits, by the face-to-face contemplation in its unity with that love by which the God who is love can be all in all (1 Cor. 13:8, 12; cf. 2 Cor. 5:7 and 1 Cor. 15:28). On the other hand, it is obvious to everyone that a society has existed for eighteen centuries, which has undeniably—regardless of whatever else the soul-searching gentlemen of the Mormons or any other race might have against its sincerity—constantly and expressly required a certain *confession* and accepted a certain *faith* as the conditions for entrance into the same, as the foundation of the building which calls itself and is known to history as Christ's Church.⁵⁰ Thus, when everything has been considered, there is nothing more for us to do, those of us who have begun to love and know the truth—except once more to express surprise that people who claim to know and believe what the aforementioned scripture states about the Lord and Peter could still have either the blindness or audacity to postulate that the Church has been destroyed—than most sincerely *to rejoice* at the sight of how that little verse about the stone, which carries the Lord's Church, is itself also a stone, from which—just as in the fairy tale about lying **Hans**—no one who has told a lie can escape the same day with a better fate than breaking his legs on it. Or is it perhaps uncharitable, even an ungodly joy, always to disapprove, but never more vehemently than when one stands opposite speakers for whom the great words about

v. A further exploration of the contents of this part, in contrast to incorrect interpretations, can be found in *Nordisk Tidsskrift for christlige Theologi*, vol. 1, pp. 91–96 [footnote in original].

50. Here again Kierkegaard's Grundtvigian emphasis on the oral tradition and its necessarily eternal nature stands out.

their deep love for the rest of us proceed so smoothly through their throats and so lightly over their tongues as we have experienced this evening? I certainly do not believe so. Firstly, because I, once I began to believe in our Lord, chose sides once and for all in the great conflict between him and the spirit that dominates the children of disobedience (Eph. 2:2; cf. 1 Jn. 3:8), therefore I *cannot refrain* from rejoicing every time it occurs anew that his opponents are put to shame by *his* Word (cf. Luke 13:17). But it must then be *our sincere hope* immediately thereafter for all those of his opponents who are fundamentally of the truth and who therefore shall come to him eventually, regardless of how long they, in their blindness, refuse to do so, that they will be profited and blessed by experiencing, very soon and very strongly, that they are incapable of kicking against the pricks (cf. Acts 26:14), because they thus—like **Paul**, after the Lord met him on the road to Damascus—will learn to lay their hands over the mouths with which they have uttered blasphemy against him (cf. 1 Tim. 1:13), before the hour comes when all mouths that speak lies will be sealed forever (Ps. 63:11). In any case it would be better for them quite soon and quite severely to go astray, as it is called, and come to harm amidst the adventures and artifices of evasion and misrepresentation here on earth, if they thereby, however belatedly, can be persuaded to give glory to God, *humbly* to bow themselves before and *faithfully* to acquire the Lord's words of truth and mercy, which have been entrusted by him to that Church which they slander and deride—that would be better than if one of them, God forbid, should finally and decisively run into that rock from which all of the lesser stones over which they stumble derive their firmness and power, and of which it is said: whosoever shall fall on this stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever it fall, it will grind him to powder (Matt. 21:44).

However, the opponents of the Church, such as we have heard this evening, still say—and this is their *second main allegation*—that in any case, *baptism* has been unmistakably and incontrovertibly *distorted and corrupted* within European so-called Christianity. Different in every particular from the way it was instituted by the Lord and practiced by his apostles, it has no valid claim upon its name, regardless of whether we consider those who are performing it, since they, after all, lack the authority from the Lord to do so, or those who are being baptized, for they are of course feeble and lack the understanding to receive and appropriate it, or, finally, the manner in which baptism is performed, as a few drops of water and a sort of sprinkling with them cannot even rightly be called a shower, let alone—as the only correct and authentic *manner of baptism* discussed

in scripture—an immersion.⁵¹ One can preach long and widely on this subject, as the examples this evening sufficiently demonstrate, first about American authority and then about the depth of the waters and water containers to be found in the Promised Land in the Lord's day, or about how completely the embryo in its mother's womb is surrounded by water and how carefully, therefore, every last nail on our bodies must be buried in the waters of baptism, as well as how particularly this is supposed to have been emphasized by the Apostles in scriptural passages of which no one has previously been able to make sense. Before we, however, venture into any of this complicated doctrine, it would not be amiss to single out *two comments*, which certainly seem to have escaped the honored speakers' notice, but which are of decisive importance for proper judgment, both of the question of the validity of the baptism which has been commonly used throughout all Christendom for hundreds of years and of the prospect that has been so favorably presented to us here of this baptism being superseded by another, namely that which, as it is claimed, has been lost for so long but is the only correct, true, and original baptism. Concerning the *first of these two points*, it becomes apparent, when not assiduously ignored or intentionally avoided, that a rather *unique connection* exists *between* the claims about the Church's downfall and those of the corruption of baptism, such that *the one*, all things considered, must stand or fall *with the other*. For baptism was not just instituted by the Lord in and for his Church, as are many other things (the sacrament, ordinations, etc.), and of which one might well believe that this or that was momentarily altered by his disciples without altogether abandoning or completely ceasing to represent his Church. But baptism is that which, of *all* of the Lord's institutions, must be appropriated *first*, and that by which people first become his disciples: it is nothing other than the entrance into the Church, and not just one entrance among many, but the only entrance into it. The Lord himself reveals this when he commands, "Make disciples of all nations (which

51. From Kierkegaard's extensive treatment of baptism in this section, it seems likely that the missionaries spoke at length concerning this ordinance. Kierkegaard's comments concerning baptism stem mainly from his belief that Christ's church could not have suffered apostasy, coupled with his exegesis of certain biblical texts. Although the missionaries seem to have engaged in similar exegetical pursuits (which, as Kierkegaard suggests, may have been beyond their grasp), the most clear scriptural teaching for Latter-day Saints on baptism comes from 3 Nephi 11:18–41. Here, the need for direct authority is demonstrated as well as a descriptive explanation of how baptism is to be performed, including the need for immersion.

means, as our fathers aptly expressed it, to ‘Christianize’ all people), baptizing them” (Matt. 28:19). This is verified by the history of the Church over eighteen centuries, during which baptism has represented the distinction between it and the world; and concerning this matter—to mention it in passing—even the Mormons are of the same opinion, such that it is also by a so-called baptism that one can gain admission to, and entrance into their, as it is called, only true Christian community. If the baptism which the Lord instituted—even if only for several centuries, and even if time is not calculated even half as generously as our Mormon preachers would like—has indeed been abolished everywhere and replaced throughout Christendom by an invalid ceremony of man’s own making, an unauthorized and illegitimate, powerless and meaningless sprinkling of small children, who, moreover, should not even have been baptized at the age and in the mental condition in which they found themselves, then the obvious consequence, unless one could possibly discover a group of people who have continued to live on earth all that time and, what is more, have attained the age of several hundred years, is that the Church has died out and vanished along with the last person who was baptized in the correct and original manner. But that, as we have just considered and assured ourselves anew, cannot be, if it was in fact founded by the Son of God in whom we believe. Furthermore, if the Church was destroyed centuries ago, then there can be no more proper baptism, for such baptism requires, as our speakers themselves have been so eager to remind us, authority from the founder of the Church, a commandment from him to undertake such an act. It is true, according to the Church’s own account and that of the scriptures, that he gave such authority to his Church or to the community of his disciples; and he promised them that he would remain with them until the end of the world (Matt. 28:19–20). This is, however, precisely why that same authority cannot have any meaning, if that community, despite his promise, has passed away; in any case, then, this authority can in no way be passed on, not by angels or stars, clouds or rivers, or whoever else one might decide to appoint as Baptists in place of the Church, even when it, like others who have departed by death, is thought to have fallen into decay, which anyone must admit is valid. But if we *then* ask, in this context, the question about whence the Mormon baptism derives its authority, *the second comment* to which I referred earlier intrudes here of its own accord. For the unmistakable observation is this: the *Mormon baptism*, whether its origins are traced back to **Joseph Smith** himself or to one of his earliest disciples or friends, who baptized him and by whom he was baptized, can never recommend itself to the conscience of anyone but, what is more, no matter how the case is presented, it *always* appears as *reprehensible*. If it is

claimed on the one hand that the one who performed the first baptism was himself *properly baptized*, that is, according to what we have recently understood from the Lord's words in Matthew 28:19–20, baptized by the Church, to which the Lord gave the authority and empowered to do so, and promised his presence and support until the end of the world: then the charge that the Church vanished “long ago” and that baptism has been corrupted “for centuries and everywhere” is just an entirely unfounded and groundless claim, or, to speak in plain Danish, a gross lie and an impertinent slander. For **Joseph Smith** was born in this century, in the same year as I was, and neither he nor his friend could have been baptized before his birth, just as it is certain enough that baptism, both in 1805 and 1705 and 1605 was administered everywhere in Christendom as it is now with regard to all of the elements of which the Mormons disapprove, so that it has at least not been changed for us poor souls after the gentlemen had received it in another and better form in the Church. It helps but little to counter with the assertion that **Joseph Smith** and his friend, despite the downfall of the Church and the corruption of baptism among the so-called Christians, were nevertheless properly baptized, namely either by an angel or by an angel's decree. For either the angel acted contrary to that which the Church's founder ordained, when he appointed his Church to perform baptisms (Matt. 28), in which case it is most likely the same angel who said to Eve: “You shall not die, I know better and have better things in mind for you than him up there” (cf. Gen. 3:4–5). Or else the Lord, God forbid that *we* should even consider this thought, broke his promise and did not remain with the Church until the end of the world, and was therefore forced at some point in time to make up for this neglect by sending an angel to a treasure-hunter in America. But in that case, it would be idolatry to believe in such a Lord, who forgets to keep his word and then has to correct his own mistake. If, *on the other hand*, one assumes that **Joseph Smith** and his friend were *not* in fact *properly* baptized themselves—and it must, in any case, be the Mormons' own claim that Smith was not baptized when he received the first of his purported visions—but that the gentlemen were made capable, in an extraordinary manner, of recognizing how the proper baptism, which they themselves had not received, should be performed and then of teaching it to the rest of us,^{vi} then this interpretation of the

vi. It is well known that J. Smith once received a revelation that the baptismal ordinance should, from now on, contain the words: “having authority from Jesum Christum [sic], I baptize you etc.” But that only illustrates that his revelations cannot be from the Holy Spirit, who, as is known, on Pentecost and thereafter has always shown itself to be the master of languages, for it is not correct in either the language of God or men to say “from Jesum Christum,” or, as the Mormon preachers commonly say, “Jesum Christum has commanded, will punish, etc.” [footnote in original].

situation cannot pretend to be any more reliable than the one we discussed first.⁵² One of the very unique characteristics of the kingdom of God, which our Savior came to earth to establish, is that *no one can see it* unless he is born again, is born of water and of the Spirit, is incorporated into it by the bath of rebirth and renewal which is precisely what the baptism instituted by the Lord is (John 3:3–5; cf. Titus 3:4–5; Matt. 28:19). The meaning of this statement is naturally not that one should not be able to feel and, as it were, catch sight of the fact that there is a church on earth that takes upon it the name of the Lord, that claims to have certain practices and institutions from him, that acts and expresses itself in a certain way, and so forth. Even the worst enemies of the Lord and of his Church have known all of these things, and they have used this knowledge often enough to their own ends in attempts to disrupt his Church, if at all possible. On the contrary, the meaning of the Lord's assertion of the unrecognizability of his kingdom for all those who have not been incorporated into it by the birth of water and the Spirit is unmistakably this, that the essence of the kingdom of God, the true nature of the source and development of its inner life, that the manner and circumstances of the Holy Spirit's involvement with it—that all of this is hidden and unrecognizable for those who are outside the Church, such that one must have been personally incorporated into the Lord's Church, have become a participant in the life of God and the Spirit which brings it about, before one can see it properly for oneself and gain true spiritual recognition of it and insight into it. In other words: Christianity is a new life, of which the natural man has no part and therefore no true comprehension either. It is namely completely impossible in truth to recognize that which one has not begun to the least degree to experience, to become a part of, to know. But, on the other hand, one can—as was the case, when the Lord walked on earth, with both **Nicodemus**, to whom he first explained the necessity of being born again, and many others, and as it has occurred within the Church ever since—become aware of, and be influenced by, the new life that we encounter in other people who have become Christian. One can hear testimony about the same presented so thoroughly and urgently that one decides for oneself to seek to take part in it through the appropriation of baptism and its

52. According to Kierkegaard's footnote, the missionaries were using the incorrect declension of the name Jesus Christ in their baptismal ordinance, using the dative form *Jesum Christum*, when they should have been using *Jesus Christus*, the nominative. No revelation of Joseph Smith in English uses the phrase "having authority from Jesum Christum." However, it is conceivable that the problem was either an error on the part of individual missionaries or the result of a mistranslation of Church documents from English into Danish.

conditions as they are offered in the Church. This is the way which **Joseph Smith**, by his own confession, would not or could not follow, since the Church, according to his account, did not exist when he and his friends were born and raised. If we remember the Lord's insistence on the absolute necessity of the new birth by means of water and the Spirit in order to *see* the kingdom of God, he [Joseph Smith] has therefore been entirely *incapable of seeing* the kingdom of God from the very beginning: of truly recognizing its nature, its spirit, its life, its true members, its unchangeable institutions, etc.⁵³ When he began to see angels, therefore, he was unable to judge whether they truly belonged to the kingdom of God as ministering spirits, sent forth for the sake of those who shall be the heirs of salvation (Heb. 1:14), or to the spirit army of wickedness that disguises itself as angels of light (Eph. 6:12; 2 Cor. 11:14). When he was guided in his buried-treasure hunting to find the mysterious plates, he was unable to determine whether or not their content was consonant with the nature of the kingdom of God. When he heard voices that slandered and mocked the Church on earth and its baptism, he was not able to judge according to the truth whether or not this was justified. In short, if one wishes to pass the mildest possible judgment on Joseph Smith, disregarding the fact that he, by all reliable accounts and all other characteristics, invented his angels, his plates, and his revelations himself, and assuming for a moment his own account of events to be true, he exposes himself by *his own* account, when compared with the Lord's words to **Nicodemus**, as a person who, unbaptized and therefore not born again, *could not see* the kingdom of God but still audaciously allowed himself to listen to angels without knowing whether they came from heaven or from hell, to evaluate scriptures without knowing if they

53. Joseph Smith was, contrary to Kierkegaard's accusation, very well aware of this distinction. Daniel Tyler gives us an account of a sermon the Prophet gave in which Joseph argued that the phrase "born again" found in John 3:3 does not refer to baptism or the gift of the Holy Ghost but to the operations of the Holy Ghost that must occur before one can even see the kingdom of God: "The birth here spoken of, the Prophet said, was not the gift of the Holy Ghost, which was promised after baptism, but was an illumination of the mind by the Spirit which attended the preaching of the gospel by the elders of the Church. . . . This was being born again to *see* the kingdom of God. They were not in it, but could see it from the outside, which they could not do until the Spirit of the Lord took the veil from before their eyes." "Daniel Tyler," in *They Knew the Prophet*, comp. Hyrum L. Andrus and Helen Mae Andrus (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1999), 56. And the kingdom of God he described as "where there is a prophet, a priest, or a righteous man unto whom God gives His oracles." Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet*, 272. What Kierkegaard meant by unchangeable institutions would have been an interesting question to pose.

originated in the kingdom of God or the devil's archives, to judge baptism without having received it and the Church without having become a member of it. But all such dealings are, according to the Lord's words to **Nicodemus**, the height of foolishness; and just as the Lord rejected his complacent assertion: "We know that thou art a teacher come from God" (John 3:2), thus must enlightened Christians always reject **Joseph Smith's** smug claim: I know that it was an angel of truth, scriptures of truth, a renewal of the kingdom of God that came to me, although I was not baptized with that baptism which I now offer you—that is, as we must clarify, despite the fact that he himself stood outside the kingdom of God at that point in time and was therefore unqualified in a spiritual sense to see it or recognize its nature. In other words, which will perhaps make it easier to summarize the situation: a man, who himself admits that he began as a non-Christian, in that he himself asserts that Christianity had vanished before he came to earth, this is the man who, from the exalted position of outsider, takes it upon himself to lead the rest of us into true Christianity. This is as if a man were to offer his services as a voice teacher, and, by way of recommending himself, boasted that he, prior to conceiving this idea, had been as unmusical as anyone and stone deaf. In **Joseph Smith** the world has found a counterpart to that pedagogue of the last century who discovered a new method of child-rearing, of which he explicitly claimed that whoever was not raised by it would never become a functioning and reasonable person. And yet this wonderful inventor had not, as he himself repeatedly emphasized, been raised by this method. Smith's claims are, however, much worse than such nonsense because the matter at stake is an upbringing and a life lived according to the instructions of Jesus Christ rather than those of Joseph Smith. Jesus Christ taught us once and for all that whosoever does not enter into his kingdom by baptism's gate can neither *see nor enter into it*, and yet it is one who, by the Lord's definition, is blind that presumes to lead the rest of us to the Lord and in by the gate that he himself, according to the words of the Lord, cannot even see, let alone open.

I have lingered at length on these two observations that we have just examined, because it is primarily in their light that one can and must see the baselessness of all this talk of the corruption of baptism, since the attempt to clarify the question by means of *a host of individual investigations* of, for example, the Greek word which is translated as "baptize," the depth and volume of water vessels in the houses of rich and poor men in the East, or the age of children who are spoken of in the scriptures as Christian, etc., must necessarily involve much scholarly information that will hardly be comprehensible to the unschooled. But if one nevertheless desires to discuss the like, as our Mormon speakers did, despite their

proclaimed simplicity and unschooled brilliance, casting out scholarly postulates about such things which are literally Greek and Hebrew to them rather than sticking to or even just touching on their main views, then I will gladly take part. I am able to cite, here on the spot if it be required, around a *dozen* scriptural passages from the New Testament in which *the Greek words* translated as “baptism” and “baptize” are used in such a way that one can *in no way* imagine *immersion*, but only either a shower or even just a partial wetting with something. For, just to name a few examples, the apostles were certainly not “immersed” in the Spirit that descended over them on Pentecost and yet the Lord calls it being baptized by the Holy Ghost (Acts 2:2–4 and 1:5);⁵⁴ the Pharisees were certainly not “completely immersed” whenever they washed their hands before meals, but it states in Luke 11:38 in the central text that they marveled that the Lord did not “baptize” himself (i.e., wet his hands, wash them) before dinner (cf. Matt. 15:2; Mark 7:3 from which one can see that nothing more than one’s hands were required to be washed); nor, indeed, was the Lord “completely immersed” in anything when he, in fulfillment of his own prophecy, was baptized with his blood in Gethsemane and on the cross (Mark 10:38; Luke 12:50; cf. 22:44; John 19:34). At times, therefore, in the New Testament, “baptize” means altogether undeniably—as far as the formal side of the matter is concerned—only being moistened or showered. And when it seems from other passages, for example in Romans 6:4 as was cited this evening, that baptism in the early days of the Church was frequently performed by immersion, as the history of the Church also confirms,⁵⁵ the unqualified use in this passage of the term “baptism” to describe both processes must be a clue to every reasonable analysis that the one baptism of which Paul speaks (Eph. 4:5) does not cease to be one and the same, whether more or less water is used, sprinkling or immersion, nor because someone else has decided that it should affect matters if the water is ice-cold or tepid, seawater or fresh, etc. I would also like to enter into a little discussion about whether the Church is correct in believing that the Lord’s

54. Kierkegaard’s argument here is tenuous at best, for he is arguing that the two verbs—*baptizo* in Acts 1:5 and *pleroo* in Acts 2:2–4—are synonymous, which would mean that when we are physically baptized, we should be “filled” with water.

55. This is strong evidence for baptism by immersion, as opposed to one citation (Luke 11:38) that shows the verb *baptizo* being used in a context that does not mean “immersion,” which could easily be explained via Greek semantics. The main problem with this entire argument is that the verb *baptizo* has both meanings, either “to immerse” or “to dip in water,” which renders a recourse to the “original Greek” fruitless in one’s attempts to “prove” that baptism must be administered a certain way.

treatment of *the small children* that were brought to him, and his words concerning them, contain the *charge* of *baptizing them*, or whether our Mormon teachers are correct in interpreting the same as meaning that they should not baptize children, but rather take them in their arms and bless them. As far as their imitation of the Lord's works is concerned, everyone can see immediately that children are ill-served thereby. Even if it were not some conceited heretic or other who embraced them, even if it were not **Joseph Smith** with his metal plates but rather **Moses** with the stone tablets of the Law, or David, Elijah, or Peter who appeared to embrace and bless them, the children would always still suffer by comparison with those for whom the Lord did the same; for it is *only* from *him* that the power to heal their souls and bodies emanates (cf. Luke 5:17; 6:19; Matt. 14:36). And on the other side: if the Lord, who is the same yesterday, today, and forever (Heb. 13:8), does not reconsider nor take back his words—if he therefore instructed his followers once and for all to let the children come unto him, but yet removed his physical presence from them not long afterwards, then he must necessarily have intended that the children should be brought unto him *there, where* he has opened the gates of the kingdom of God once and for all, namely in baptism, which he commanded should be the requirement for being counted among those with whom he will be until the end of the world (Matt. 28:19–20). But if it were possible for a sincere heart to doubt this interpretation of the situation, then every shadow of doubt must disappear as soon as we observe that already the apostles, when they wrote to the congregations, expressly also *address the children*⁵⁶ (Eph. 6:1; Col. 3:20; 1 Jn. 2:13), that they therefore also include them among those addressed in the letters' salutation to the "saints . . . and to the faithful in Christ Jesus" (Eph. 1:1), "to the saints and faithful brethren in Christ" (Col. 1:2), to those who have "an unction from the Holy One," i.e., who have been "Christianized" (1 Jn. 2:20), much less when we take the time to consider the fact that **Paul** himself urges the children to do something "in the Lord" (Eph. 6:1 (4); Col. 3:20). For this can

56. It should be pointed out that in these verses neither Paul nor John gives any information as to the exact ages of the children in question, which suggests Kierkegaard's unfamiliarity with the LDS doctrine of accountability at age eight. Interestingly enough, the term Paul uses here for "children" is different from the Greek for "infants," *nepioi*, which could render these declarations entirely consistent with LDS doctrine. It should also be pointed out that *nepios* is actually an adjective and could very well be used, but again neither Paul nor John uses it thus, which indicates that the "children" could very well have been much older than infants. In fact, John's term *neaniskoi* is actually translated "young men" in the KJV. Regardless of such considerations, the most clear scriptural foundation for why Latter-day Saints do not baptize infants is found in Moroni 8.

only be asked with bitter mockery of someone who is not already grafted into the Lord; and this grafting occurs, as the same apostle testifies, precisely through baptism (Rom. 6:3–4; Gal. 3:27–28): by contrast, whatever a man does without being baptized, however excellent and praiseworthy—it cannot be done “in the Lord.” Furthermore, I would very much like to clarify that although the Lord, in the Gospel of **Mark**, sets faith before baptism: he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved (Mark 16:16), in **Matthew** he places baptism ahead of teaching and the faith that grows from the same when he says: Make all people disciples by baptizing them . . . and by teaching them, etc. (Matt. 28:19–20). It has not, then, escaped the Lord’s notice but has been clearly announced by him in advance, that baptism and faith should surely be required of everyone who wants to belong to him, but that the *order* should be *different*: among the adults who were previously Jews or Gentiles faith is followed by baptism; among the children whom faithful parents desire to lead to him baptism comes first, then teaching and faith thereon.⁵⁷ And while the passage in Matthew sounds different in our customary translations, so that the Lord seems to say: teach them, baptize them, and teach them—then I will explain with pleasure that it is an error in translation that originated in the older Latin translation, which many other translations in German, Danish, etc., follow, rather than carefully examining the language and preserving what is written in the *original language*. The truth of this cannot, of course, be made evident to anyone except those who can themselves read and translate the books of the New Testament as they are written in Greek. But if our Mormon congregation here cannot do that, it shows even more clearly how unreasonable it is for these people, who must believe blindly in the accuracy of the translation of the Bible’s content as it is found throughout Christianity, to claim that this same Christianity has corrupted baptism and doctrine and must therefore also be negligent in its translation of the scriptures. As I stated before, I will gladly discuss all this and more with anyone who desires to have these particular points clarified. But regarding my main concern, namely the validity of baptism, I must *emphasize once more* the things that have been exhaustively discussed previously and

57. Kierkegaard’s explanation of the baptism of infants as representing a promise made by the child’s parents to raise the child in the Christian faith is entirely consistent with the doctrinal views of the Danish Lutheran Church, but it is also one that he took very literally. In 1842, Kierkegaard very nearly lost his job by refusing to perform forcible baptisms of the children of Baptist parents as mandated by Danish law at the time, since he, along with Grundtvig, believed that the covenant of baptism was a private matter between the individual (in this case, the parents) and the Lord in which the state should have no part.

which everyone can understand and evaluate in all simplicity, without much profound learning. The *first point* is that if baptism has been corrupted, then the Church has been destroyed; if so, its founder, who promised to remain until the end of the world, is not the Son of God, and faith in him is falsehood and idolatry: therefore no one who believes that baptism is and has long been corrupted everywhere on earth *can* truly be, or sincerely and with heartfelt desire want to be, a Christian. The *next point* is that Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormons, has either received the proper baptism from the Church to whom the Lord entrusted it (Matt. 28:19–20); in which case he is lying and blaspheming when he calls baptism corrupted and the Church destroyed; or else he has not received true baptism, in which case he is blind concerning the kingdom of God and the holy universal Church, its nature, and its institutions (John 3:3–5), so that he is a blind guide when he recommends to us the Mormon baptism, which certainly is a “burial” as far as that goes, insofar as both the person performing and the person receiving the baptism fall into the ditch (Luke 6:39).

If we now turn, in closing, to the *third central claim* that was presented to us this evening, namely regarding the *Lord’s return* to give judgment and *the gathering of the faithful* to him and salvation with him, there is in this doctrine a curious blend of truth and falsehood. Many of the things that have just been fervently proclaimed here are well-founded, but can only rarely be touched upon because of the weak state of the churches in this region, which require constant attention to the founding principles of Christianity. For example, the conviction that not just the faithful will be resurrected with transfigured bodies, but that the entire earth, which has been full of misery and corruption because of the sins of mankind, will also be cleansed and renewed to a state like unto the paradise that existed in the first days of humankind; that the wildness of animals and the barrenness of the fields will cease, likewise the confusion and viciousness in the hearts of men that contain the reason for them (Rom. 8:18–23; cf. Isa. 11:4–9; 65:20–25; and many more passages); and that, in this state of bliss, that which is written shall literally be fulfilled, namely that the meek shall inherit the earth (Matt. 5:5). Even that which has been declared here, that these things will take place in a millennial kingdom of God on the earth, an assertion which many of my listeners likely have heard for the first time on this occasion, is by no means unbiblical, although not heavily emphasized in scripture and, on those occasions, in relatively difficult constructions (Rev. 20:4–6; cf. 2 Pet. 3:8; and other such passages), as though the Spirit wanted to ensure that these imaginings would not be immediately seized upon and humanly misunderstood by new converts, but rather only gradually should dawn, as it were, on those who are advanced and strengthened in the faith. For my part, I would gladly speak much more often about

all of this in the Church than has been the case previously, since it is edifying to think about and to read about in the scriptures.^{vii} At this point, however, the speaker who dwelt at length on this joined it to a *double falsehood*. In *the first place*, he *would not hear* of the notion that this state of bliss on the transfigured earth is yet another *preparation* for even greater happiness in the glorious heavens; he did not understand that the Church shall raise itself from this state on earth into the skies, just as the Lord ascended into heaven; he even spoke with contempt about such a hope as “empty and hollow and contradictory to the scriptures.” But in this he has the very testimony of the scriptures against him. In precisely the same passage that he himself cited, salvation on the glorified earth is explained as lasting not eternally but rather a thousand years, to be followed by the Day of Judgment and the state thereafter (Rev. 20:4–15; 21:1ff).⁵⁸ **Paul** states explicitly that both the believers who died previously and took part in the first resurrection (and the Millennium, for such is the first resurrection called, Rev. 20:5–6), as well as the believers who still live in mortality will, finally, be caught up together in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air and remain with the Lord forever (1 Thes. 4:16–17). And, by his own word, *he* will be there where they can behold the glory he possessed before the foundations of the world were laid (John 17:24). One of the final speaker’s misconceptions about this matter can be found herein, in that he does not or chooses not to know that the primary characteristics of the life of Christ, as named in the second article of faith,⁵⁹ shall be repeated in his Church,

vii. Should someone suspect me of having felt myself forced to admit these things now only because of the Mormons’ insistence, he would perhaps change his mind upon discovering that I published a little poem already in 1840, which I had written many years previously in sorrow over a death, in which I rejoice in the same expectation (Nordisk Tidsskrift for christlige Theologi, vol. 1, p. 357) [footnote in original].

58. The actual Latter-day Saint position on this subject is somewhat more complicated than Kierkegaard (and perhaps the missionary) indicates. According to Latter-day Saints, the Second Coming of Jesus Christ will inaugurate the millennial reign of Christ upon the earth (D&C 29:11). At the end of those thousand years, Satan will be loosed for a season, after which good will ultimately triumph and Satan will be eternally banished (Rev. 20:7, 10). After this banishment, those who receive celestial glory will dwell on this earth—albeit a renewed, perfected, and glorified earth, different from the current one in many respects (D&C 130:6–11).

59. It is unclear what second article of faith Kierkegaard refers to here. It does not seem to be a reference to the LDS articles of faith. The term “article of faith” or “declaration of faith” is very common in both Catholic and Protestant theological history, and this wording probably refers to the memorized confession of faith used in the Danish church at the time.

such that we shall not simply be resurrected with perfected bodies as he was, but also ascend into heaven with them, as he did and as has been prefigured by **Enoch** (Gen. 5:24) and **Elijah** (2 Kgs. 2:11). The *second* misconception, which is far more destructive, is found in the fact that he spoke as if the Millennium could and should come *before the resurrection* of the dead. Three hundred years ago a large group in Germany taught a similar doctrine, the *Münzer and Münster Rebaptists*,⁶⁰ whose doings are also remarkably similar to those of the Mormons. For they also attempted, in direct consequence of the expectation of an earthly kingdom of God prior to the resurrection of the dead, e.g., a kingdom of God of this world (cf. John 18:36–37), to establish this kingdom as soon as possible. Therefore, like the Mormons in Utah, they established such a “Zion” in Westfalia; just as the Mormons summon people to **Deseret**, they called all those who wanted to avoid judgment when the Lord comes to gather to the city of Münster; as the Mormons do now, they armed groups for the defense and expansion of the kingdom who were occasionally successful and just as frequently defeated, as the Mormons are; they introduced, like the Mormons, polygamy, as it was called “after the example of Abraham and according to the teachings of the scriptures”; and they finished by being destroyed by the neighboring princes, without the Lord appearing in their day, which they promised each other would take place in the near future, just as the Mormons now, three hundred years later, promise and threaten. But this entire misconception is now much more apparent and tangible, as it were, since the only passage in the scriptures that explicitly mentions the Millennium also states clearly that it refers only to the faithful who are dead and resurrected (Rev. 20:4–6). The flesh and blood in us is naturally eager to bypass death in order to take part, immediately and as we are now, in the glorification of the body and nature and mastery over the earth. But that simply *cannot* be done *as* we would like it and *because* we would like

60. The German city of Münster, near the Dutch border, was the site of a disastrous attempt in 1534–36 by a group of Anabaptists to recreate idealized conditions of the early Christian church. After taking control of the city, which had been the scene of considerable contention between the Catholic bishop and Protestant reformers, the leaders of the Anabaptist group evicted all non-believers and enforced practices including the banning of all music and ornamentation, the sharing of all property in common, segregation of the sexes, polygamy, and unconditional obedience to a prophet-king in anticipation of the Millennium. The city was ultimately retaken by the bishop of Münster, with the help of German princes, and the Anabaptists were massacred and expelled. Similar events took place in the Dutch cities of Leyden and Amsterdam. J. M. Cramp, *Baptist History: From the Foundation of the Christian Church to the Close of the Eighteenth Century*, from www.reformedreader.org/history/cramp/so5cho8.htm.

it. Instead, it will happen in some way to the last generation to live on this earth, but only because the faithful within it will have passed through the great temptation such that they all, before having suffered physical death of the natural man, will be dead to sin and the world (cf. 1 Cor. 15:50–54; 2 Thes. 2:3–12; Luke 21:12–19; Rev. 3:10). For the law remains: like the master, so the man. And just as **Peter** tried in vain to prevent the Lord from allowing himself to be crucified (Matt. 16:21–23), driven, among other things, by the fear that if the Lord were to die on the cross, his disciples would also suffer the same fate, it is equally useless for us to dream of escaping, whether by a journey to Utah or even to the moon, the necessity of passing *through death* into life. It is not just directly contradictory to the testimony of the scriptures and therefore impossible to dream of such a thing, regardless of how desirable it may possibly seem to us in the moment, but such fantasies are highly *destructive* to the *development of a Christian life*, to the point, when they become completely assimilated and dominant, of making it impossible and replacing it with a kind of mortal fulfillment of the same expectations—in which individual leaders take the place of the not-yet-visibly-revealed Savior and a comfortable mortal life supplants the renewal of paradise—in the actually impending kingdom of God on the perfected earth. Where these fantasies reign, we always encounter the not just un-Christian but even anti-Christian figure, who is hostile to Christianity and perverts and corrupts its nature: a *spiritual* leader who is *also*, by virtue of his spiritual position, a powerful man of the *world*, a Pope such as there is in **Rome** or a President of the Kingdom of God such as exists in **Deseret** and **Utah**.⁶¹ In the exemplary kingdom of God on earth, namely among the people of Israel, and in every bourgeois community worthy of the name, the offices of prophets, priests, and kings, or whatever the equivalent positions are called in each place, are, as a rule, separate, divided among different people, such that the last two are never entrusted to the same person.

61. While it is true that combining spiritual and secular power often does result in abuse, Latter-day Saints have theological reasons for believing that this abuse is avoidable. Since the purpose of the Church is to build Zion, the ultimate goal of the Church is to transform all “secular” areas and institutions into thoroughly spiritual ones. Indeed, as the Doctrine and Covenants teaches, for Latter-day Saints there is no strong distinction between the spiritual and secular realms, as the Lord himself informs that He gives no “temporal” commandments even when instructing about things such as the economic structure, the proportions of buildings, and the selling of property (D&C 29:35). Obviously this transforming process is designed to be done under the authority of the priesthood, which can operate only “by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love unfeigned” (D&C 121:41), hardly the kind of abuse Kierkegaard discusses.

By contrast, in the perfect kingdom of God, all three are united in the one true Anointed One, eternal prophet, priest, and king for the entire race of men, Jesus Christ. It is to be noted, however, that *until* he comes in a cloud to judge the world, he will *not* establish his kingship by *worldly* strength, for his kingdom is not of this world (John 18:36). Therefore, in every circle in which the attempt is made to unite these offices in *anyone other* than him, even if the exercise of the same and the rule is as mild and gentle as possible, *apostasy* and *tyranny* are fundamentally present. This is perhaps most wildly and violently true when the emperor, king, or supreme worldly ruler *also* dictates the worship, faith, and doctrine of the Church, as in the Roman Empire, Russia, and Turkey. But the situation that is most insidious and best suited to seducing and deceiving the unenlightened arises when the prophet and priest, i.e. the man who speaks as the messenger of God and in whose society one seeks the remission of sins, is *also* the worldly leader, to whom it has perhaps been revealed that none can be saved who does not contribute to the fund with which he, by revelation, builds temples under his own control, or who sees by the Spirit who is to be condemned and carries out this judgment with steel and fire, as is often the case with the Pope in Rome and now the President of the Mormons.^{viii} And in such spiritual-temporal kingdoms, one does *not await* the Lord's Second Coming, since he literally will reveal himself openly and outwardly, and claim his dominion in which his followers will inherit and possess the earth. And *there on earth*, people rush to possess it and will crave its enjoyments. *There*, even before the resurrection of the dead, a sham kingdom of Christ is established, which, however, shall also be of the world; *there* its members fight with worldly weapons in opposition to the word of the Lord (John 18:36). And *there*, they fulfill *two other* prophecies of the Lord concerning those who stray. *First*, that they will perish by the sword because they wield swords themselves (Matt. 26:52): that their simulated, earthly kingdoms of Christ will perish in blood and misery, and they will, in their destruction, take with them all of the temporal happiness of people who instead sought and waited elsewhere on earth. *Moreover*, if they will not be warned by this and return penitently to his kingdom that is not of this world but is, like him, homeless and defenseless, frequently mocked and despised in this world, to the holy universal Church, they will ultimately share the fate of the world, which will perish, while his word, and the Church he has founded thereupon, will exist forever.

viii. A contribution to the reasoning, which can only be hinted at here, behind the discussion of the perfect union of the three offices in Christ and, by contrast, their necessary separation among sinful men, can be found in the *Continuation from Pedersborg*, vol. 3, p. 43–132 [footnote in original].

And this must be enough for this evening, although I do want to explain in a few words how I regard my answer to these most recent pronouncements of false doctrine to us and among us. Considering what took place this evening, when the Mormon gentlemen held up the light for everyone who wanted to see their empty chatter and unfounded claims overturned in the arena they had chosen for themselves, I am far from declaring the intellect,⁶² or, as the gentlemen this evening often stated, reason, to be the proper measure by which everything that should be rightfully presented as divine truth for salvation should be apportioned and accommodated. I am, however, convinced of and hope to be able to demonstrate in all brevity the correctness of *two not unimportant propositions*, which stand in contrast (though naturally not in contradiction) to each other, such that each limits and more exactly determines the other, and which must be connected to each other if one desires to reach a correct judgment about the *relationship between a divine revelation* on one hand and *human intellect and reason* on the other. To wit, every supposed revelation—and this is the *first* of these propositions—which, as the Mormons have claimed this evening about their “Christianity,” is in complete agreement with and can be proved as a matter of course to agree with reason, which can, in other words, be made comprehensible and, as it were, transparent for the natural man and show itself to agree with his thought processes, cannot possibly be true and divine.⁶³ For if God’s thoughts are not superior to our

62. Kierkegaard’s insistence on the emotional component of faith not only echoes his brother Søren’s rejection of the rationalism that pervaded the Danish People’s Church in the mid-nineteenth century, but also reflects his own religious upbringing by his father, Michael Pedersen Kierkegaard, who was a proponent of the pietistic Herrnhuter sect that emphasized a highly sentimental, sensual relationship to the suffering of Christ. Bruce H. Kirmmse, *Kierkegaard in Golden Age Denmark* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990), 33.

63. This is a standard claim found throughout Christian history, both Catholic and Protestant. To cite a few examples: Ignatius, “O Holy Father . . . your greatness is beyond all comprehension of rational minds and spirits.” Ignatius, *Liturgia, Sancti Ignatii*, in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus . . . Series Graeca*, 161 volumes (Paris: J.-P. Migne, 1857–66), 5:969. John Chrysostom, “On the Incomprehensible Nature of God.” John Chrysostom, in J.-P. Migne, *Patrologiae Cursus Completus*, 48:719. Later Christian authors would use words such as “incomprehensible” and “mystery”: Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae*, 61 vols. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), 9:117–21; Jean Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Ford Lewis Battles, ed. John T. McNeill, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), 1:121; and First Vatican Council, Sess. III, Canons, 4, *De fide et Ratione*, 1.

In stark contrast to this, Joseph Smith once said: “It is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God, and to know that we may

thoughts, if his ways are not higher than our ways (Isa. 55:8), then we do not need him to reveal them to us; or, more precisely: a God, about whose revelations something like this can justifiably be said, is an idol. Moreover, because all of us are sinful, including those of us who are intellectual or rational, and all sorts of confusion and darkness have entered our minds and replaced the original light, it follows that the divine witness to the truth concerning God, us, and the relationship between the two, must necessarily, insofar as and as long as we are in this state, seem strange and foreign, even unreasonable and irrational, and thus it could in no way appear to be “in all points and parts in accordance with reason.” But let us now turn to *the second* proposition that I would like to discuss, which limits and qualifies the first, as follows. Every supposed revelation that cannot be recognized by the reason and intellect of the natural man—which is certainly, as we just saw, obscured and confused because of sin, although by no means completely incapacitated and destroyed, for if this were the case, human beings would no longer be human⁶⁴—as entirely deserving of our attention and trust above all other human doctrine and speech cannot be either true or divine. For if a revelation cannot be recognized as such before it is accepted by individuals, then it is entirely arbitrary whether someone accepts it or not; and this would be the case regardless of the fact that every true revelation, as a word from God, necessarily requires that those who hear it must accept it, and this makes it a great responsibility for them who do not accept it, just as we hear our Savior testify that everyone that is of the truth hears his voice (John 18:37), and that whoever does not believe did not desire to see or recognize the truth of the words that were offered him, and so he is already condemned (John 3:18–19; 9:41; cf. 16:8–9). If any part of *these two* claims, which I can only discuss briefly and suggest the reasons for, still seems unclear or inconclusive to my listeners, it will

converse with him as one man converses with another.” Smith, *Teachings of the Prophet*, 345. While classical and contemporary theology seems to operate on the maxim “a God understood is a God dethroned,” the Latter-day Saints contend that God *wants* to be known, indeed, *can* be known: “And this is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou hast sent” (John 17:3). As President Spencer W. Kimball put it: “Man can know God. It is not only a privilege to know God, it is a necessity if man wishes to gain highest blessings. . . . As servants of the Lord, we proclaim to all the world that any man, every man may know of God, and participate in the great saving and exalting work of God.” Spencer W. Kimball, *The Teachings of Spencer W. Kimball*, ed. Edward L. Kimball (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1982), 3.

64. This argument finds its roots in Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, where he defines man as a “rational animal,” meaning that rationality serves as man’s defining characteristic or that which sets him apart from the other animals.

surely become clearer and reveal itself in all of its unshakable certainty as soon as they realize that these claims are *in no way my own* invention, but that they are based on all of *the Lord's* statements about the faithful appropriation of the divine word of truth that he preached among people. On the one hand, he speaks about it many times in declaring himself to be the only man who can recognize and understand the divine truth, such that men must believe him *blindly* and *unconditionally*, even if he speaks directly against the convictions of their own reason, if they do not desire to exclude themselves from taking part in the grace and truth he brings to them (Matt. 11:27; John 3:11–18; 8:24; 12:46–50; 14:6; and many other passages).⁶⁵ But, on the other hand, he claims just as frequently that there are *sufficient reasons* to give him this unqualified trust—reasonable justifications for believing his words instead of and in contradiction to our own intellect and reason—and that these reasons could be obvious to every naturally honest and reasonable person, whether the Lord derives them from the Baptist's testimony or from his own miracles (John 5:31–36; 10:25; 15:24; cf. Matt. 21:23–27; 9:6–7), from prophecies about him (John 5:46–47), from his *own conduct* (John 7:18; 8:46), or from the coherence and credibility of his own speech and the unreasonableness of his enemies' speech (John 8:13–14, 39–45; Matt. 12:24–29), etc. But if this is the case, then the way has been shown and *the rule given* for everyone who is called to testify of Christian truth, either against attacks and objections or against misrepresentations and distortions. Thus are we also certainly authorized, even called—just as I have endeavored on this occasion to do—to point out emphatically all of the confusing, self-contradictory, and ungodly things that brashly appear or slyly conceal themselves in every attack on our Christian faith and doctrine, as it exists in the holy universal Church, passed down from the Lord and his apostles; and to demonstrate clearly how this faith and doctrine shows itself, by means of many reasons that must be plain to

65. Early LDS leadership would have definitely rejected this assertion, for while they held, like Kierkegaard, that we should be obedient to God and that God had good reasons for commanding what he does, they never taught *unconditional* obedience. Rather, they taught exactly what Kierkegaard was arguing *against*, namely that one should use reason combined with revelation to discover the reasons behind God's commands. Consider the following quotation: "We talk of obedience, but do we require any man or woman to ignorantly obey the counsels that are given? Do the first Presidency require it? No, never. What do they desire? That we may have our minds opened and our understandings enlarged, *that we may comprehend all true principles for ourselves*; then we will be easily governed thereby, we shall yield obedience *with our eyes open*, and it will be a pleasure for us to do so." Joseph F. Smith, in *Journal of Discourses*, 26 vols. (Liverpool: F. D. Richards, 1855–86), 16:248, October 7, 1873; italics added.

every naturally honest and reasonable person, to be worthy of our attention and the most unconditional trust. But we must never dare to imagine that the matter is at an end thereby. This we must never forget to remind our listeners and ourselves, that we have, with all such demonstrations, only reached, as it were, the forecourt where it will be determined whether or not we will benefit from the Savior and his words. That is as far as we can proceed with all such reasons and proofs, and it is there that we must reach an eternal decision in that we both can and ought to decide to believe in him unconditionally and entrust ourselves to him, regardless of how murky, even incredible the things he asks us to believe may seem to our human intellect or how heavy and unbearable the things he requires of us may seem to our hearts. And therefore I cannot close this meeting without such a declaration.

I have raised arguments that testify to the authenticity of our Christianity, and I have seriously discussed and refuted that which has apparently been stated against it here, while I have had fun with some of the nonsense that could be found amidst the objections and was too unfounded to be treated seriously. But both the seriousness and the jest will *only* be of real and lasting benefit to us *if* we, in rejecting this new heresy that revives and redoubles old delusions by pointing out some of the good old arguments that testify of the one original faith and baptism that are preserved even today in the Lord's Church, have felt ourselves challenged and strengthened in the desire to *appropriate this faith* and *this baptism* and thereby to actively merge with the true Church of the Lord, regardless of how much of its teachings seem either fanciful and strange, even unreasonable, to our natural intellect, or are completely opposite our natural will with all that follows it. If we do so, we will come further and further toward and into the *one perfect, eternally decisive proof* of the truth of our faith and the validity of our baptism, which cannot be proven or judged by human intellect and reason, but which the faithful have in themselves and for themselves, and which can precisely therefore not be touched, let alone shaken, by any victory that other, more refined and better-dressed⁶⁶ heretics might possibly ever win over us or others of those who preach the

66. Since the early Mormon missionaries often traveled literally "without purse or scrip," the likelihood that their clothes were shabby is high. Kierkegaard's jibe also seems to support the widespread belief among religious historians that all Danish converts to Mormonism came from the poorest segments of Danish society. However, in fact, many early Danish converts were quite prosperous and used their funds to assist less financially well-off Saints to emigrate to Utah. Søren Christoffersen, who was likely one of the missionaries present, was a very well-to-do farmer who made a present of fifty dollars to President John Van Cott when

original, unchanged Christianity in all of its simplicity. Then we reach the place where the Lord calls all of those who have been attentive to his testimony by continuing to say to them, as to the Jews in days of old: “My doctrine is not mine, but his that sent me. If any man *will do his will*, he shall *know of the doctrine*, whether it be of God or whether I speak of myself” (John 7:16–17); and by explaining to us that it is the will of his Father that we should believe in his Son (John 6:28–29), that is, in him who, according to the authority transmitted from above (Matt. 28:18), has made baptism and faith the gate and conditions of entrance into his kingdom (Matt. 28:19–20; Mark 16:16). And *this life experience* of what happens to us and in us when we sincerely fulfill our baptismal covenants in a true conversion and a living faith, and when we, thus justified, appropriate the things that were assigned us by baptism; this sense of real peace that the Lord began to pour out into our hearts when he promised us the remission of our sins through baptism; these stirrings of something different and better, part of the Lord’s own mind and heart, that arise in us in consequence of the baptism whereby God the Father has given us rebirth as the brothers and sisters of the Lord; the presence of the Spirit in us with light and life, with reproof and comfort, with righteousness and peace and joy, for which reason he descends over and through which he is in those who are initiated into his temple through faith and baptism; all this is not alone the decisive proof of our Christianity, our faith, our baptism, our Church, but rather the *acceptance*, possession, and application of Christianity’s *divine abundance*, without which we would be just as poorly situated in time and eternity, whether we were otherwise able to silence all those who speak against it or if we were struck dumb by the first opposition. It is therefore that **John** states, “He that believeth on the Son of God hath the witness in himself . . . and this is the record, that God hath given unto us eternal life, and this life is in his son” (1 Jn. 5:10–12). But if we accept this testimony, then we will also—to touch on this once more in passing—gradually develop the *harmony between* our intellect and the teachings of the gospel with which the Mormon gentlemen began and which they immediately established as the measure of the correctness of the teachings of the gospel. Christianity is a rebirth, a renewal of our fallen nature to its original glory and therefore also of the intellect to the correct recognition of the truth (John 8:32; Col. 3:10; 1 Tim. 2:4). If we, therefore, by means of faith and the Church, live righteously and sincerely accept the word of God, the content of the same will necessarily reveal itself more and more as agreeing with,

he toured the Danish mission in September 1855. Annie Van Cott, “Van Cott History,” 89, Perry Special Collections.

and will gradually become as it were transparent for, the *reborn* reason in the community of believers, so that the “revealed secret” that is the testimony of Christ, which is the same for all of the faithful, can become the object of our gradually more clear and encompassing true understanding; yet even the entire Church here below will never reach absolute insight, but will long for and strive for the sight of it face to face.

Let us, therefore, in consequence of today’s debate, make an earnest attempt to undertake this lifelong trial of the veracity of our Christianity. If we do so, I know in my conscience that no false doctrine will ever be too powerful for us; nor will this meeting have been in vain and cause us regret here or hereafter.⁶⁷

67. Although Kierkegaard may well have preferred the intellectual stimulation of clerical conferences to the mundane details of running a parish, as his critics asserted, his sincere Christian beliefs and concern for the spiritual well-being of his parishioners come across clearly in the final passages of this text. See Leif Grane, “Søren Broder. Om Peter Christian Kierkegaard,” in *Fra Egtvedpigen til Folketinget* [Søren’s Brother. About Peter Christian Kierkegaard, in From the Egtved Girl to Parliament], ed. Poul Lindegård Hjorth, Erik Dal, and David Favrholt (Copenhagen: Munksgaard, 1997), 638.

Jon Meacham. *American Gospel: God, the Founding Fathers, and the Making of a Nation.*

New York: Random House, 2006.

Reviewed by Neal W. Kramer

Jon Meacham, managing editor of *Newsweek*, makes a notable contribution to the crucial national conversation about the roles of religion in American public and political discourse in his new book, *American Gospel*. Many religious Americans have come to believe that religion has been virtually banned from the public square. Some have turned to the Founding Fathers to find justification for overt reliance upon sectarian religious politics, often quoting them out of context and thereby diminishing the force of their arguments. Conversely, some secularists have asserted that Jefferson's "wall of separation" between church and state, also understood out of context, is to be interpreted so broadly that any political religious expression must be interpreted as sectarian. Meacham tries to restore the proper context for this debate. His extended essay, not a scholarly book but an argument meant to outline and justify an educated opinion, focuses on defining this public gospel as a fusion of faith and freedom.

Meacham argues that freedom and faith have been linked since the earliest colonists arrived on these shores. From the Mayflower Compact to the Declaration of Independence, the majority of early Americans were convinced that liberty was a gift of Providence and therefore protected and ratified by the same source. At the same time, Americans were convinced that a state church based on European models was to be avoided. They were convinced that such churches fostered tyranny and were too closely connected to claims for absolute rule that had been made by monarchs like Louis XIV and, to a lesser extent, Charles I. Therefore, they sought to protect expressions of faith and prohibit the government from giving special treatment to any particular sect, Christian or Jewish.

Perhaps the most important contribution of the book, especially for nonhistorians, is its impressive collection of statements from the founders and later American leaders from all parties defining and employing the rhetoric of the American Gospel. This faith has two overlapping

characteristics: (1) its nonsectarian character, and (2) the free exercise of religion. Meacham demonstrates the nonsectarian character of the discourse by offering quotations from centrally important founders: Washington, Adams, Jefferson, Madison, and Franklin. He offers selections from official documents, military orders given by Washington, private correspondence, sermons, and varied other sources. The accumulated force of these quotations suggests a broader rather than a narrower conception of faith, even when terms like “Christian” are employed. For example, after a near riot in New York City that included Continentals, Washington issued this stern rebuke: “The general hopes and trusts that every officer and man will endeavor so to live and act as becomes a Christian soldier, defending the dearest rights and liberties of his country” (77). Washington uses the term here to define an elevated moral and ethical standard for troop conduct that is firmly grounded in faith in God. At the same time, it is not an invitation for any Jewish soldiers to convert. And it certainly is not meant to include only particular Protestant sects, excluding Catholics, Quakers, or other not-truly-Christian Christians.

Thus, the right to the free exercise of religion (words carefully crafted by Patrick Henry and James Madison) becomes a central feature of the American Gospel. This right was not meant to be limited to a few core sects. Franklin offers this wry justification: “When [the] professors of [a particular sect] are obliged to call for the help of the civil power [meaning state sponsorship], it is a sign, I apprehend, of its being a bad one” (69). This does not mean that religion per se does not deserve a special place in society or that it should not receive significant respect from the civil government. To the contrary, Meacham emphasizes the respect the founders and leaders of succeeding generations have had for the profound role religion plays in any nation that desires to remain free.

Meacham also shows how difficult this has sometimes been in our history. He details accounts of the persecution of small religious groups. He bemoans the religious justification of slavery. He details the challenges faced by presidents from Andrew Jackson to Ronald Reagan as they have used the American Gospel to unite the nation while still keeping matters of personal faith separate from government. He singles out the example of the founding of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to detail the vexing character of the challenge. Official government persecution and prosecution of the Mormon faith is a clear example of the failure of the nation to live up to the standards of the American Gospel while providing nonetheless an environment in which a fledgling religion might still be protected enough to flourish after much trouble.

For Latter-day Saint readers interested in these issues, *The American Gospel* provides yet another way of thinking about the founding of the United States and its continuing importance in our public life. Meacham makes a well-argued case favoring a robust language of faith in the public square, without turning it into a matter of sectarian correctness. John Adams once said, “I hate polemical politics and polemical divinity” (18). To Jon Meacham, this is clear evidence of the wisdom of the founders.

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Barton E. Dahneke.
*Define Universe and Give Two Examples:
A Comparison of Scientific and Christian Belief.*
Palmyra, N.Y.: BDS Publications, 2006

Reviewed by Noel L. Owen

As one might deduce from its title, this is a very unusual book. In the first five hundred pages, the author includes three sections: (1) Perception of Reality, (2) Material-Universe Science, and (3) Total-Universe Christianity. Following these sections are approximately one hundred pages of appendices. After the first section's wordy and detailed account of the philosophies associated with science and the search for truth, the second section deals with the way science has developed and how absolute truth is difficult to find from observations and deductions based on natural science. The third section gives a detailed account of the doctrine of Christ and how this can lead to absolute truth. Each section has a huge number of extensive and sometimes very interesting endnotes, and the book as a whole is a wealth of knowledge on specific topics.

The purview of the book is enormous, and it is to Dr. Dahneke's credit that he discusses aspects of philosophy, science, and religion in a very knowledgeable way. Dahneke states in the preface that he wrote the book primarily for his extended family and friends so that they can better understand his beliefs and convictions. He also comments that he has written the book for readers who have no special preparation in science and mathematics; however, without some interest and background in those subjects the text will make very heavy reading. The contents of this book come under the general umbrella of natural philosophy. Whereas the original doctors of natural philosophy were considered experts in virtually all known science and philosophy, these days very few PhDs study deeply outside their own narrow area of research. Consequently, the number of people who will read and enjoy all the material covered in this book is somewhat limited, although I think that the text might be of considerable value to philosophy of science teachers. Despite the all-encompassing title, the author has self-imposed restrictions on both the science and the religious aspects of the book. He has deliberately chosen the field of

physics (and especially mechanics) as the most appropriate representation of science, and only Christianity (with special emphasis on Mormonism) is included in the discussion of religion.

The book is self-published, which helps explain why the overall style tends to veer toward the verbose with much repetition of certain ideas. However, to me the book resembles a large quartz stone in which we find small ingots of pure gold. There is a great deal of information within its covers, some of which I found fascinating and informative; maybe the best way to enjoy the book is to dip or delve into selected sections, rather than to wade through all the philosophical and scientific details. Some of the highlights for me include the following: the author's vignettes of the development of science and mathematics; a readable and understandable outline of the theory of relativity (161–71); and some fascinating insights into the work of Galileo, Kepler, Copernicus, and Newton, among others (103–56). Although I have read a great deal about Isaac Newton's life, his scientific and mathematical discoveries, and his years investigating alchemy, Dahneke's discussion of Newton's interesting views regarding the religious concept of the trinity were new and fascinating to me (144–47). The endnotes and references are very extensive, and many contain gems of information and insight. For example, the endnote on Tyndale's work in publishing the English Bible is well worth reading (125–28). A summary of the development of quantum mechanics is expounded in greater detail than that found in many science textbooks, and there are sections on more esoteric topics such as quantum electrodynamics and the grand unified theory. The author's justification that mechanics is the basis of virtually all the hard sciences may read a little indigestibly to most biologists, chemists, and biochemists, and there is certainly an underlying feeling in the book that physics tops the scale of the sciences.

In a very similar manner, the author makes no bones concerning the superiority of the beliefs of the Latter-day Saints over other Christian churches, and LDS readers will enjoy his discussion of the doctrine of Christ. There are many scriptural quotes from the Bible as well as from the Book of Mormon, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Doctrine and Covenants. However, readers who are nonbelievers or agnostic will find the transition from the scientific approach to the Christian approach a little sudden and abrupt and may balk at Dahneke's assertion that faith is of overarching importance. The author scatters throughout the book eighteen propositions as short paragraphs that summarize his thoughts and conclusions regarding the issues under discussion. Although most are logical, carefully worded, and make perfect sense, I suspect that a few are too dogmatic to satisfy everyone.

Over the past several centuries, scientific discoveries have caused considerable dissent among church authorities, resulting often in persecution of individuals by the organized churches of that period.¹ The dichotomy between religious and scientific approaches that have been utilized to search for answers to some of humanity's important questions was described in 1964 by C. P. Snow in his classic book *The Two Cultures*.² Recently there has been a spate of books written by scientists on the subject of God and religion, and several of these are highly critical of religion and its influence on humanity.³ It is timely to have a book that discusses both topics in an in-depth and unique way, and which comes out very much in favor of Christianity and its procedures to discover absolute truth. Dahneke gives a lucid account of the apostasy of the early Christian church, and he makes a very strong case for the latter-day restoration of the gospel of Christ and for the importance of the correct authority for priesthood ordinations.

It is interesting to compare the approach adopted by the author to that expressed by another LDS scientist—the late Henry Eyring—in some of his writings. Dahneke addresses the science and religion issues in a very logical and organized manner; he looks at both sides of an argument and declares in a very definitive way his conclusions, and in some instances he states his own views on controversial issues, such as pre-Adamic men. Eyring, on the other hand, although he held quite definitive views on some matters, often stated that he did not know the answers to many questions, but that did not bother him because he would put them on the “back burner,” since he was convinced that eventually he would know the truth. As a convert to the Church in the 1970s and as a scientist, I found the number of available LDS books that covered science and religion very limited, and I benefitted greatly from Eyring's philosophy that one should not be too concerned if there are issues for which currently there are no definitive answers. Had Dahneke's book been written earlier, as a new convert I would have certainly benefitted from reading parts of it as well.

In the chapter that discusses the role of faith in science (219–62), the author uses thermodynamics as an example of the prototype of a good and well-tested theory. He outlines the subject briefly in the text and refers readers to a more detailed mathematical treatment in one of the appendices. Along with other definitions, he quotes the well-known statement of Clausius concerning the second law of thermodynamics, namely, the energy of the world is constant; the entropy of the world is increasing. The author states quite correctly that if applied to our Earth the comment about entropy is false, since the definition of entropy infers an isolated system (that is, no energy entering or leaving the system), but when the law is

applied to the whole universe, it is true. He further states in a footnote that the universe is an isolated system. I find this a surprising statement coming from a committed Christian. If one believes in a God who created the universe and who can obviously inject energy into the universe at will, it is difficult to envision the universe as a closed system. In that case, Clausius' statement is obviously misleading and untrue even when applied to the whole universe as the "system."

In the penultimate chapter, Dahneke describes the interesting stories of two early LDS pioneers, who, it turns out, are directly connected with his own family. The rationale for including them involves the importance of Christian faith and the joy (as well as the sacrifice!) that follows true discipleship. Such stories are important for family members to know and appreciate, but they are a little incongruous in a book that invites readers of all ilk.

The appendices include detailed mathematical explanations of topics such as relativity, gravitational theory, quantum field theory, and Bell's theorem of correlated events, as well as sections from the Book of Mormon and a brief insight into the metaphysics of Immanuel Kant. In addition, as an example in a section discussing limitations in scientific inquiry, the author includes a detailed and critical study of the government reports on unidentified flying objects. The book has a very comprehensive index and is beautifully produced.

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1. For example, the trial and inquisition of Galileo by the Catholic Church for his support of the findings of Copernicus, who claimed that in the solar system the earth revolved around the sun and not vice versa, and the controversy in the Anglican Church arising from Charles Darwin's findings on the origin of species.

2. C. P. Snow, *The Two Cultures* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964).

3. For example: Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion* (London: Bantam, 2006).

Vickie Cleverley Speak. "God Has Made Us a Kingdom":
James Strang and the Midwest Mormons.
Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2006.

Reviewed by Roger Terry

Award-winning journalist Vickie Cleverley Speak was not looking for the Mormons during the summer of 1991. She was looking for basket-making materials, and the nearest shop was in Burlington, Wisconsin, at the corner of Highway 36 and Mormon Road. Surprised to find evidence of Mormons in Wisconsin, she took Mormon Road that day. It led to the community of Voree and to the beginning of a fifteen-year odyssey that would result in yet another book about James Jesse Strang, self-proclaimed successor to Joseph Smith.

Several biographies about Strang were already in print in 1991, including Milo M. Quaife's seminal history *The Kingdom of Saint James: A Narrative of the Mormons* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930); O. W. Riegel's *Crown of Glory: The Life of James J. Strang, Moses of the Mormons* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935); Doyle C. Fitzpatrick's partisan *The King Strang Story: A Vindication of James J. Strang, the Beaver Island Mormon King* (Lansing, Mich.: National Heritage, 1970); and Roger Van Noord's *King of Beaver Island: The Life and Assassination of James Jesse Strang* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988).

The existence of such works raises the valid question, why does the world need yet another biography of the enigmatic Strang? Speak offers several reasons for writing her book. First, she relied extensively on primary sources, some of which were unavailable to earlier biographers. "New facts and resources are still being discovered," and "old records are ready for re-examination and reinterpretation" (x). Second, Speak claims her book is not a biography but "an attempt to tell the fuller story of the Strangites—their trials and tribulations and efforts to maintain the Strangite Church during their founder's ministry and after his death" (xi). Third, the story of the Strangites is "a compelling and intriguing one. Many writers, including Strang's own descendants, have struggled with the logistics of how to relate the tale without sensationalizing it, and,"

Speek confesses, "so have I" (xi). The difficulty in writing about Strang is similar to the complex task of writing about Joseph Smith. As Van Noord pointed out in his book's preface, bias and misinformation abound. The original sources, in particular, are often inclined for or against Strang. Many of them come from Strang himself—his autobiography, diary, letters, and publications—or from his followers. Others come from his enemies. Sorting out fact from misrepresentation is no easy task. In spite of these difficulties, Speek's book is an engaging, insightful, and well-researched exploration of a complicated man, his family, and his followers.

"*God Has Made Us a Kingdom*" divides unevenly into two separate sections: the first (and longer) part details Strang's life and death; the second part explores what happened to his family and followers after his murder. Speek cannot avoid the almost eerie parallels between James Strang and Joseph Smith: self-proclaimed divine appointment, claims of finding and translating engraved metal plates, persecution resulting from unconventional doctrines and a concentrated gathering of followers, public denial and private practice of polygamy, coronation as "King on earth," dissension within the ranks, John C. Bennett's ruinous role in both men's lives, and, finally, untimely assassination. Although neither Strang nor Smith explicitly named a successor, the circumstances of their deaths were different enough that while Strang's flock remained shepherdless, numerous would-be successors to Joseph Smith stepped forward, one (Joseph III) as late as 1860.

Speek is sympathetic toward Strang and his followers, but she is also careful to explore Strang's duplicities (as when his first plural wife, Elvira Field, accompanied him to New York masquerading as a nephew and personal secretary named Charley Douglass); his questionable doctrines (for instance, the practice of "consecration"—stealing gentiles' property for the kingdom of God); and his aspirations to nobility. "*God Has Made Us a Kingdom*" is well documented, but the author's preference for allowing biased eyewitnesses to speak for themselves obscures at times the objectivity of her history. She also fails to explore the validity of the appointment letter Strang claimed he received from Joseph Smith or the authenticity of the metal plates he reportedly found and translated.

By all accounts, the story of James Jesse Strang and his disciples is both bizarre and tragic; and it has not yet ended, as about one hundred members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangite) persist. Where Speek's book sets itself apart from other histories, however, is in her research of the lives of his five wives, their children, and many of Strang's followers. The second and shorter part of the book focuses on

what happened after Strang's death to the people whose lives were bound together with his.

Using the controversial letter purportedly sent to him by Joseph Smith and also the claim that an angel anointed him Smith's successor, Strang gathered as many as believed him, first to Voree, Wisconsin, then to Beaver Island, the largest island in Lake Michigan. It was on Beaver Island that he instituted polygamy and was crowned king; it was also there that two disaffected followers shot and mortally wounded him on June 16, 1856. He died twenty-three days later in Voree.

During those twenty-three days, Strang steadfastly refused to name a successor, even though he knew his demise was imminent. Consequently, when his followers were driven from Beaver Island, they gathered either in small groups or went their separate ways, often in search of work, having lost all their possessions in the forced exodus. Many of Strang's followers gave up on Mormonism altogether and simply settled into new lives, never revealing their past to their neighbors.

When James Strang died, he left five wives, four of whom were pregnant. Their stories, interestingly, are quite characteristic of what happened to Strang's followers in general. Strang had his first wife, Mary Abigail Perce, banished from Beaver Island five years prior to his death, perhaps because she had tried to kill the baby of his first plural wife, Elvira. Mary and her three surviving children lived for a time with her brother in Illinois, but they later returned to their home in Voree, where they ran a farm. Ironically, they were not at home on July 1, 1856, when James was brought, mortally wounded, from Beaver Island, nor did they return before he died. Mary lived in Voree for several years before moving to Terre Haute, Indiana. She lived there with her daughters, her son, and his family until her own death on April 30, 1880. She never remarried. Her son, William, was so bitter about his father's polygamous involvement that he discouraged his sister Myraette from even writing her half brothers and sisters.

When a dying Strang left Beaver Island, wives Betsy McNutt and Phoebe Wright traveled with him. The two other wives, Elvira Field and Phoebe's sister Sarah, left the island a few days later. Sarah visited her husband briefly on his deathbed but left with her father's family. Phoebe stayed until James died, then also joined her parents. Elvira did not arrive in Voree until two days after Strang's death. She and Betsy lived together in Voree for a time, and both women gave birth in January 1857. Eventually, Elvira returned to her parents' home in Michigan. After her father's death, Elvira fell desperately ill and placed her four children with other families. After three years she finally recovered and was able to retrieve the older three children, but the couple who had adopted the youngest, James J. Strang, considered him

their own and even renamed him Charles J. Grier. In 1865, Elvira married John Baker, a widower with five children. Although he was a good man, he was not religious. Elvira did not join another church but was involved in "Christian work" the rest of her life (266). She died of bronchitis on June 13, 1910. While James Strang was living, Elvira obviously believed his claim to be a prophet and Joseph Smith's successor, but later in life she apparently harbored doubts that she shared with her children. Two of her sons, Charles Strang (named after his mother, "Charley Douglass") and Clement Strang, took an interest in their father's life, and the documents Speek references in her book include their letters and other writings.

After Elvira departed for Michigan, Betsy and her brother John, also a Strangite, moved their families to Indiana, then back again to Wisconsin. Betsy's daughter Evangeline married John Denio, a Strangite widower who, at forty, was closer to his mother-in-law's age (forty-seven) than his wife's (thirteen or fourteen). In 1883 the Denios moved to Davis City, Iowa, where they joined the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. They eventually moved to Lamoni, Iowa, headquarters of the RLDS Church. Betsy McNutt accompanied the Denios to Iowa, where she passed away in 1897, but it is not clear whether she ever joined the RLDS Church. James Strang had told Betsy before his death that she would be one of the last to deny him. And this indeed appears to have been the case. Of note is the report that Betsy carried with her a chest containing manuscripts, letters, and other articles of interest, including the controversial plates Strang claimed to have found near Voree. According to Heman H. Smith of the RLDS Church, Betsy still had the plates with her when she moved to Lamoni but loaned them to Charles Hall, a Hedrickite. Hall's wife then purportedly loaned the plates to two elders from the LDS Church in Utah, and they were never returned.

Phoebe Wright lived for many years with her father, Phineas, in Wisconsin. She dropped the name Strang, however, and instead used her husband's middle name. Phoebe Jesse seldom talked about Strang, but she genuinely loved him. When her daughter, Eugenia, married Thomas Phillips, a local businessman, Phoebe moved in with them. Phillips became manager of a bank in Duluth, Minnesota, and spent two years in Salt Lake City before being assigned to Tacoma, Washington. Phoebe accompanied them on these moves, eventually dying in Tacoma, on November 9, 1914, at the age of seventy-eight. She never remarried, and Eugenia was her only child.

Of Strang's five wives, Sarah Wright's story is the most remarkable. After leaving her dying husband, Sarah eventually married a self-taught doctor named Joseph Smith Wing who, ironically, was not a Mormon.

When “Brighamite” missionaries came to the area, Joseph joined the Utah church and set out for the Rocky Mountains with his family. While passing through Illinois, Sarah had a disconcerting experience. They stopped to visit a family Joseph said he knew. The only person at home was the twelve-year-old daughter. After asking her if she would like to go riding with them, Wing put her on the horse with him and rode off. He never took her back home. When Sarah questioned her husband, Joseph disclosed that the girl was his daughter from a previous marriage. This was not Sarah’s only surprise. Wing had also married and abandoned two other women. So Sarah was not his first wife; she was the fourth. And she would not be the last: in Utah, Church leaders asked Joseph to participate in polygamy. Although Sarah had renounced the practice after Strang’s death, she watched Joseph marry six additional wives. Eventually, as she grew increasingly dissatisfied with both her marriage and polygamy, she left Wing and established her own medical practice in Springville, having learned the profession from her much-married husband. Sarah served her Mormon neighbors for many years, but she eventually became disenchanted with the LDS Church and left it. She died at age eighty-seven at the home of her daughter Amanda in Boise, Idaho. Even though Sarah admitted to Milo Quaife in 1920 that she no longer believed God spoke to prophets, her grandson Mark claimed she “remained faithful to Strang’s underlying religious convictions and high moral standards,” (294) and she always spoke highly of him.

“God Has Made Us a Kingdom” does not answer all the questions surrounding James Jesse Strang and the people who followed him, but anyone interested in this branch of Mormon history will surely want to read Vickie Cleverley Speek’s book.

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Kathleen Flake. *The Politics of American Religious Identity: The Seating of Senator Reed Smoot, Mormon Apostle*.
Chapel Hill and London: University of North Carolina Press, 2004

Reviewed by Todd M. Kerstetter

This book's title does not do justice to its remarkable contents. *BYU Studies* readers will recognize Reed Smoot's name and understand his significance, but too many others, even those well informed about U.S. history, will do little better than to link Senator Smoot with a tariff.¹ Kathleen Flake's excellent monograph illustrates the significance of religion in the Progressive Era and brilliantly puts it into context by linking it to critical themes, including problems with concentration of power and the contested issues of national identity in a time of immigration, imperialism, and reform.

Flake found a fascinating forum to explore these themes in the investigative hearings inspired by Smoot's 1903 election to the U.S. Senate. The hearings, which started in 1904 and ended in 1907, saw senators, prompted by constituents, investigate the appropriateness of seating an Apostle of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Flake skillfully uses these events to show that the so-called Mormon Problem had not been resolved in the 1890s but lingered into the twentieth century. According to Flake, the Smoot hearings prompted the Church to forcefully and truly abandon the practice of plural marriage, thereby becoming a true denominational U.S. citizen. As the Church demonstrated its willingness to abide by social and political norms, the Senate, acting as a proxy for U.S. society, softened its moral crusade against the Church.

Two questions drive Flake's telling of the story. First, "How do religious communities change over time and retain a sense of sameness with their originating vision?" Second, "What are the political terms by which diverse religions are brought within America's constitutional order?" (1). The Smoot hearings reminded the public that the "Mormon Problem" had not been solved. Despite a change in Church policy dating to 1890, some Mormons continued to practice polygamy, and the Church's tolerance seemed to demonstrate recalcitrance. In inspired phrasing, Flake

characterizes the issue as a conflict “between the nation with the soul of a church and the church with the soul of a nation” (7).

The book’s six chapters begin with “The American Idea of a Church.” Flake opens the chapter with Smoot’s election to the U.S. Senate in 1903 and delves into how that episode sparked a vigorous protest from the nation’s Protestant center, representatives of which feared the presence of an ecclesiastical figure in a political body. Flake conducts a brisk tour of religious freedom in the United States through the turn of the twentieth century and shows how the nation’s values conflicted with those of the Latter-day Saints. The nation’s Protestant center saw two critical problems in Mormonism: that it resembled popery and that its structure did not fit the nation’s model for denominationalism, in which church members voluntarily chose their spiritual affiliations. Together these characteristics threatened the nation’s republican values. That such a religious organization would send one of its top leaders to the U.S. Senate seemed like an act of rebellion to Protestants in the East. Facing this situation, President Joseph F. Smith decided to move in a new direction, to heal the rift between the Church and the nation. Despite the opposition, Smith felt that having Smoot in the Senate would be a tool vital to accomplishing that task.

Upon his selection as Utah’s senator, Smoot found himself at the center of this tug-of-war, which Flake details thoroughly in chapter 2, “The Man Who Served Two Masters.” Here Flake sketches Smoot’s biography and sets the stage for the Senate hearing. Although petitions protesting Smoot’s seating in the Senate arrived in Washington even as he did in March 1903, officials followed procedure and seated him. Within forty-eight hours, though, the Senate referred the protests to the Committee on Privileges and Elections, which announced it would hold hearings in February 1904. It became clear in the intervening months that few in the Senate objected to Smoot, but that the committee would use the hearings to investigate the Church. Namely, it would investigate the extent to which polygamy survived and whether a Mormon, be he a senator or a regular citizen, would obey U.S. law when it conflicted with God’s law.

The tension between church and state comes through clearly in chapter 4, “The Common Good.” In December 1904, one witness, a disaffected former Mormon, recounted his memory of a temple rite that included an oath of vengeance against the United States for its role in the death of Joseph Smith. This complicated Smoot’s defense as he would not only have to deal with the polygamy issue, but also with the reawakened notion that Latter-day Saints represented a faction hostile to the United States. The polygamy issue became thornier thanks to evidence that Apostles Matthias F. Cowley and John W. Taylor had taken additional wives after

the 1890 Manifesto and because they defied subpoenas to appear before the Senate. Joseph F. Smith responded to these challenges by restricting marriage practices to prohibit plural marriages and by convincing Cowley and Taylor to resign their posts.

This paved the way for Smoot in Washington, but created a dilemma for Smith and the faithful. Essentially, Smith had to actively rescind the practices of one revelation (regarding plural marriage) without undermining belief in revelation as a distinctive Latter-day Saint characteristic. In a fascinating chapter, "Re-Placing Memory," Flake argues that Joseph F. Smith and other Church leaders accomplished this delicate balance through two acts. First, they used the centennial celebration of Joseph Smith's birth to emphasize his most distinctive contributions and to neglect his most controversial actions. Church leaders traveled from Utah to Joseph Smith's Vermont birthplace and from there to Kirtland, Ohio. The commemorative journey skipped Independence, Missouri, and Nauvoo, Illinois, where Smith's leadership produced the prototype for theocratic government, anticapitalist economic practices, and plural marriage. According to Flake, this marked a concerted effort to emphasize Latter-day Saint distinctiveness and to begin the process of forgetting beliefs and practices that put the group at odds with the nation. Second, the leadership in 1908 added the 1890 Manifesto to the Doctrine and Covenants under the heading "Official Declaration." Thus the leadership gave a new title to Church scripture that today might be called politically correct, but that title seemed to some to make the Manifesto subordinate to full revelation.

In the book's final chapter, "Defining Denominational Citizenship," Flake covers the investigation's resolution in 1907 and its significance, but the chapter's great contribution rests in its discussion of the Smoot episode's broader significance for U.S. history. The Church changed to behave more like what mainstream U.S. society viewed as an acceptable citizen, and the Senate, after approaching the Smoot affair in the style of a nineteenth-century moral reform, decided to accept the Apostle on procedural grounds in keeping with a more modern notion of a regulatory state. Or, as Flake so nicely puts it, "In sum, it can be said that the Mormon Problem was solved finally because the Mormons had figured out how to act more like an American church, a civil religion; the Senate, less like one" (158).

Flake's work contributes to understanding how early-twentieth-century politicians sought to increase democracy by regulating concentrated power, represented here by the Church. The book adds depth and nuance to scholarship on Church leadership and doctrine by tracing the transition from pre-Manifesto to post-Manifesto Mormonism into the

twentieth century. Flake shows how doctrine and practice fell into practical application, and how the Church and its members entered another phase of acceptance. Flake deserves high praise for assembling a creative, insightful project supported by thorough, balanced research and for using her legal background to craft a clear discussion of complex events.

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1. The Smoot-Hawley Tariff Act, which dramatically increased tax rates on thousands of imported goods, was signed into law in 1930. Economists and historians dispute whether the tariffs contributed to the Great Depression.

Melanie J. Wright. *Religion and Film: An Introduction*.

New York: I. B. Tauris, 2007

Reviewed by Kent R. Bean

Melanie J. Wright's *Religion and Film* would seem, on the surface, the perfect text for anyone with an interest in religion and the cinema, especially given that some critics, as she notes, link the rise of film to a decline in religious authority (2). Whatever the truth of that assertion, religion has learned to live with the new art form. Wright asserts, "Religion has not been displaced by a new medium: [religion] has colonised [film], and has found itself challenged and altered in the course of the encounter" (2). Indeed, while Christians are among some of the harshest critics of the cinema today, they also routinely use it as a vehicle for spirituality—consider our own faith's recent productions, such as *Legacy* (1993) and *The Testaments* (2000). Even Hollywood uses (or misuses) religion, as evidenced in the recent production of *The Da Vinci Code* (2006) and the avalanche of commentary that followed in its wake (2–3), and the recently released film *Evan Almighty* (2007), which, though not technically a religious film, was marketed as family friendly to the religious community.¹ In a way, religion and film have a similar goal: both endeavor to make manifest the otherwise unrepresentable (4).

Relatively few studies try to engage the topic of film and religion systematically, and Wright's book is an attempt to correct that. Wright strives to offer "key concepts, questions and themes that can be applied more generally" (5–6). Film is often not taken seriously in religious or theological circles; it's relegated to a "special issue" that is ultimately "marginal to mainstream scholarly discourse" (22). Yet Wright warns that film and religion studies cannot merely mimic film studies; there are already film critics who do that well (24). Her hope is that *Religion and Film* can be the first stone in an avalanche of books and articles that take religion in film seriously *as* religion, not as an offshoot of some other phenomenon.

Wright chooses six films to examine, each in their own chapter: *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928), *The Ten Commandments* (1956), *The*

Wicker Man (1973), *My Son the Fanatic* (1997), *Keeping the Faith* (2000), and *Lagaan: Once upon a Time in India* (2001). She chooses films accessible on DVD, films in which religion is a prominent feature, and films that suggest “the range of works that constitute cinema worldwide” (6–7). The films represent an interesting cross section of religious films, as they cover an art film (*La Passion*), a biblical epic (*Ten Commandments*), a drive-in exploitation movie (*Wicker Man*), a British issue-film (*My Son*), a simple Hollywood comedy (*Keeping the Faith*), and a Bollywood musical (*Lagaan*).

However, while Wright’s introductory material may be useful for the individual interested in the intersection of religion and film, her discussions of specific films may prove less useful. It was less so for me, and I assume it will also be less so for many readers of *BYU Studies*, who likely have a very specific notion of religion and what is meant by that term. Her discussion may prove more useful for someone who has no specific religious affiliation.

I agree with Wright in her quest to take religion on its own terms. In my research in culture studies, I have often been disturbed by the discipline’s tendency to break down religion into just a component of race, class, or sexuality, rather than approaching religion on its own terms. Folklorist Eric A. Eliason at Brigham Young University explains that much scholarship, influenced by culture studies, elides religion in favor of its own pet concerns:

Recognizing class, gender, ethnicity, nation, race, and sexuality as a limited set of sufficiently explanatory human concerns, cultural studies has failed to even acknowledge religion as a significant aspect of human experience and identity let alone provide any useful theorization of its operation. Cultural Studies has not moved far beyond Marx’s facile “opiate of the masses.” Without acknowledgment, religion and religion-like cultural forms tend to be marginalized and grossly misunderstood by scholars influenced by cultural studies.²

While Wright is not guilty of reducing religion to just another aspect of race, class, or sexuality, her discussion of religion never rises above the general. She does discuss religious dimensions in certain films, but it never becomes the specific type of religious discussion to which Latter-day Saints are accustomed. When she discusses *Lagaan*, she explains the nature of Bollywood (films made in Bombay), notes that such films cannot be analyzed using Western generic categories (143–45), and then explains how to understand the religion in the film that will, in all likelihood, not be familiar to the average American or British viewer (148–57). Yet her discussion does not go significantly beyond that.

Religions do not exist simply to be viewed as an object; they exist to be believed, used, employed, and deployed. Thus, it would make more sense for a believing Hindu or Muslim (both of which are represented in *Lagaan*) to analyze the film and explain how the film can be seen in the larger context of his or her worldview. Perhaps serious religious scholarship must perforce be *specific* religious scholarship. For example, how might Latter-day Saints use Cecil B. DeMille's *The Ten Commandments*? How does its pseudo-history become infused with traditional LDS interpretations of Old Testament history? How is the film used in tradition—is it viewed annually with family? Or in the case of the much less familiar *My Son the Fanatic*, could the message of a father's secularism leading to a son's religious fanaticism have relevance to our own context despite its Muslim characters? Are Mormons, like Muslims, "out of place" in their society, or have we found ways to accommodate? And if we have found ways, what has this accommodation cost us? Such dialogue with the films in question could be fascinating, but it would necessarily be specific to each person's faith community.

I do not mean to imply that every film should be translated into an LDS context, but films can be viewed interreligiously, as well as intrareligiously. Religion is in danger of being reduced to a subsidiary aspect of society—the tendency of much of modern-day scholarship—when it remains generic. In order to justify religion's existence as a prime mover in people's lives, as something that for many people is much more important than their status in society, we must speak of specific faith communities.

Near the end of *Religion and Film*, Wright notes that Mel Gibson's *The Passion of The Christ* (2004) "became at once a marker of Christian identity, a medium through which audiences could proclaim and mark their affiliation" (172). Perhaps the activity of viewing and owning a film is more important than any formalistic analysis of the qualities contained therein. Films, I believe, are particularly prone to be *used* by audiences, not simply viewed. Such use-value has only been compounded with the advent of videotapes, DVDs, video iPods, and cell phones that play movies. Despite Wright's best efforts, I do not think she ever truly uncovers anything particularly religious in her discussion of the six films; she merely talks around them. It would have been more valuable to discuss how the films are used by religious communities. It is not enough to discuss what film is; we must discuss what it does.

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1. Josh Friedman and Lorenza Muñoz report:

“It’s a really good launch to a film that’s going to be talked about with friends and family,” said Nikki Rocco, the studio’s president of domestic distribution. . . .

“The key to success of a movie like ‘Evan’ is to attract the faith-based audience while not alienating the secular audience,” said analyst Paul Dergarabedian of research firm Media by Numbers. . . .

Despite being a comedy, “Evan” is explicit in its religious references. Carell’s character, Evan Baxter, is awakened at 6:14 in the morning—a reference to the biblical passage in Genesis in which God commands Noah to build the ark. (Josh Friedman and Lorenza Muñoz, “Universal Prays amid Weak Launch of ‘Evan,’” *Los Angeles Times*, June 25, 2007, C1)

2. Eric A. Eliason, “Celebrating Zion: Pioneers in Mormon Popular Historical Expression” (PhD diss., University of Texas at Austin, 1998), 111.

Philip Jenkins. *The Next Christendom:
The Coming of Global Christianity.*
Revised and Expanded Edition.
New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.

Reviewed by Mark L. Grover

The headline of an article announcing the May 2007 visit of Pope Benedict XVI to South America reads, “Pope to Visit ‘Pentecostalized’ Brazil.”¹ To anyone familiar with worldwide Catholicism, the suggestion that Brazil, the most Catholic country in the world, is “pentecostalized,” is an eye-opener. The article, however, is correct. Brazil, along with much of the Southern Hemisphere, is experiencing a religious transformation and revival that could parallel in importance the Protestant Reformation in Europe during the sixteenth century. This book by Philip Jenkins is a landmark publication that renders an important overview of the evolving nature of worldwide Christianity.

The 2002 first edition of Dr. Jenkins’s book won several awards, including being named as one of the top ten religious books of the year by both *USA Today* and *Booklist*. The first edition of this volume was written before the 9/11 destruction of the World Trade Center towers, and Jenkins felt that experience so changed the world that the book should be updated. His additions place Christianity in the post-9/11 world in which we now live. He also includes a discussion of the present conflict in the Anglican faith that supports his ideas concerning the nature of Protestantism outside of Europe and the United States.

Jenkins’s thesis is that what might be characterized as “Western Christianity” has been decreasing in influence worldwide in favor of a new religious construct he designates “Southern Christianity.” Christianity, as some authors have suggested, is not decreasing in size in favor of secularism or Islam but is alive and well though changed. The second component of his argument is that the religious foundation of this expansion is evolving from Pentecostal-Charismatic structures and practices. The fastest growing of these movements are theologically conservative and have a strong belief in the supernatural.

Jenkins's ideas are not new to many Christian scholars, particularly those who study the growth and expansion of religion. Popular academic books such as Harvey Cox's *Fire from Heaven* (1995) and David Stoll's *Is Latin America Turning Protestant?* (1990) have examined some of these issues previously. Mainstream Northern Christian scholarship, however, often fails to acknowledge the movements, particularly into Africa, choosing instead to continue to focus on European-based and liberal Christianity. Jenkins correctly places the debate and dismissal as a secularly influenced ideological conflict. For the last century, European and American scholars, influenced by secular concepts of modernization, have made the commonplace assumption that Christianity is on the decline and will ultimately disappear. This ideology suggests that the empty pews and the graying of the congregations prove that traditional Christianity is irrelevant in a scientific and reason-based society. The only way to avoid the complete disappearance of religion is to abandon outdated "supernatural doctrines and moral assumptions" (10), change its beliefs on miracles and gender, and become more modern (secular).

Jenkins points out that these conflicts are ideological assumptions with limited connection to the reality of what is happening. He shows that these pessimistic ideas on religion could not be more wrong when looking at global Christianity. Not only has growth occurred within Christianity, but that growth has also been significant in the young adult population, creating vibrant and active movements. The growth of Southern Christianity is of such importance that Jenkins suggests that the center of Christianity in the near future will not be Europe or North America but Latin America and Africa.

The Mormon connection that Jenkins acknowledges in a one-page discussion is fairly obvious (76). The demographic change that is happening to Christianity is mirrored in The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Europe, historically the font for LDS growth, is experiencing a significant decrease in the number of converts. Missions are being consolidated, and the number of missionaries is significantly decreasing. Decreasing birthrates among the members also continue to shrink the congregations. A significant percentage of the few converts to Mormonism are coming from the immigrant populations in Europe, principally from Africa and Latin America. Growth of Mormonism in the United States and Canada continues to be significantly higher than in Europe, but here again, the number of immigrants joining the Church is a significant percentage of that growth.

In terms of numbers, the center of Mormonism is shifting. Though the growth rate in Latin America has declined in the past five years,

the baptismal rate is still higher than anywhere else in the world. With a continuation of this growth, the number of baptized members in Latin America will be greater than the rest of the Church within fifteen years. The issue of retention still creates challenges, but the Latin Americanization of the LDS faith continues to occur. As Jenkins suggests, "This church represents another of the great success stories in modern Latin American religion" (76).

The African growth of the LDS faith is a story that is just beginning. Though the Church in Africa is still small and has been affected by its very recent history, political challenges, and a deliberate slowing of growth, the potential for Church expansion in Africa could become something that has never been experienced or contemplated in Mormon history.

In other ways, however, Mormonism does not fit well in Jenkins's model. Though the Church is growing, its expansion is slow in comparison to the movements Jenkins is profiling. The LDS movement is a beneficiary of the environment that is encouraging religious change, but in outright comparison the Church is a minor player more than a major participant. Mormons are visually recognized because of their missionaries, temples, and chapels, but the numbers joining the Church pale in comparison to most of the Evangelical movements. Latter-day Saints are also not recognized as part of the movement in part because of their failure to use the media the way Evangelical groups do. LDS converts are often teenagers and young adults, but the economic level of the members is higher than the average of those in Evangelical churches.

Mormons are also different theologically. Though they exhibit some of the traits espoused by the Evangelical movement such as sexual and moral conservatism, they do not fit in other ways. LDS conservatism is an American conservatism based on middle-class family values. They are attractive to some Latin Americans but are futurist ideals that do little to help in the realities of day-to-day living in the Third World. Mormon supernatural activities, though very much a part of the religious experience, are constrained, individual, and mostly private, unlike the communal, intense experiences of the Evangelicals. LDS worship services appear outwardly more like those of liberal Protestant churches and are unlike the lively, animated, and spontaneous services that are common with Evangelicals and Charismatic Catholics. Lastly, the Evangelicals can expand and grow much faster because of the belief in a priesthood of the believers, whereas Mormonism experiences a methodical, often plodding growth in which almost everything is controlled by priesthood authority from above.

In a book of this nature there is always room for criticism related to detail, which I will not undertake. This is a book about ideas and change,

not detail. The importance of this book is that it focuses mainline religious scholarship on the reality of the Christian world, not on secular ideological preferences. It suggests we are seeing not the death of Christianity but a vibrant restructuring of a religious movement that will continue to have an important influence worldwide. Jenkins carefully suggests that the Christianity of the future is somewhat of a return to a Christianity closer to its origins than the Western version developed in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. He also extends a call to scholars to investigate and study this new version of Christianity. It will be through this type of research that the misunderstanding and lack of acceptance will disappear and an appreciation of what is developing will occur. That call can also be made to many Mormon scholars who seem fixated on the American foundations of a religion that is going through transformations that many do not understand or appreciate. There is a lot to be discovered, understood, and appreciated about Mormonism south of the Rio Grande River and beyond the Mediterranean Sea.

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1. See the Pew Forum on Religion and Public Life Weekly Update, April 19, 2007, at <http://pewforum.org/docs/?DocID=199>.

Philip Zaleski and Carol Zaleski. *Prayer: A History*.

New York: Houghton Mifflin, 2005

Reviewed by Patrick Q. Mason

When Adam and Eve were cast out of the Garden of Eden, Latter-day Saints believe, they built an altar and offered sacrifice to the Lord (see Moses 5:4–5). In other words, they prayed. This may have been the first time that humans truly prayed, at least according to the biblical tradition. Before that, man and woman walked and talked with God in the cool of the evening garden. As mortality settled upon them, they turned immediately to prayer to recapture, distantly but genuinely and powerfully, something of the sacred among the thorns and thistles of their newly profane world. Whether taking the form of a child's simple bedside pleading for God "my soul to keep" or the intricate rites performed at temples to maintain balance in the cosmos and guarantee providential favor, prayer is the sacred link between earth and heaven. Or, as Philip and Carol Zaleski define it in their book *Prayer: A History*, "Prayer is action that communicates between human and divine realms" (5).

The title of the book, or more specifically the subtitle, is somewhat misleading. *Prayer: A History* is less a conventional chronological history than a historically informed examination of the multiple modes of human interaction with the numinous. Although they do begin with Neanderthals and early modern humans of the Upper Paleolithic in the first chapter before moving on to the contemporary period, the authors' intention is not necessarily to proceed from the beginning to the end of human history and hit all points in between in more or less linear fashion. Rather, the Zaleskis seek to develop "a *theory* of prayer that uses to advantage the realities of prayer as manifested in the lives of individual human beings and human cultures" (32, my emphasis). Human history is therefore not so much the subject of the book as the stage upon which it is set, and the true object of study is prayer itself.

This approach differs from that of previous observers of human prayer life, particularly late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century social

scientists such as Sir Edward Burnett Tylor, Sir James George Frazer, and Sigmund Freud, whose theories about the evolution of religious experience are considered in *Prayer's* first chapter. These intellectual luminaries created a secularist consensus that the rationale for prayer, which for them was culture's appendix and an outlived and unnecessary vestige of the ancient world, would shrivel as science bloomed and took mystery out of the world.

The Zaleskis are not content with such reductionist arguments. Their view is that while social science has its place, “only an empathetic study of prayer,” taken largely from those who actually participate in and experience it, “can reveal prayer’s secret life” (28). Their analysis is more in line with William James in his tour de force *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, in which he argues that prayer actually bears fruit in bringing about positive change in the modern world and therefore should be taken seriously. The Zaleskis’ fundamental plea—and methodology—is for us to “listen to those who pray” (30). The chapters are thus stocked with real-life examples of prayer, along with depictions of and advice regarding prayer from those who experienced its power in their lives.

Chapters 2 and 3 examine, respectively, two different models of prayer, those of the magician and of the priest. While both skeptics and believers usually consider magic to be a lower form of religion, the authors assert that magic has always been, and continues to be, an essential ingredient in prayer. Looking at examples from the Greco-Roman, Jewish, and Christian worlds, the Zaleskis show that “prayer without any hint of magic in it, without any sense that there is a power residing in its words and actions . . . would be a sterile and lifeless thing.” On the other hand, if prayer devolves into a “mechanical technique” for manipulating the cosmos to achieve selfish ends, it lacks “the vital spirit of humility and dependency on divine grace.” In short, “prayer must have a magical dimension, or it falls flat; but prayer must keep the magical dimension in check” (39). While the onslaught of secular modernity has done much to reduce the magical dimension of religion,¹ the book’s acknowledgment of the magical essence of prayer in the Judeo-Christian tradition is an important and welcome reminder for modern readers who think that magic is somehow foreign to their spiritual heritage. For LDS readers, this chapter may help provide a broader historical and theoretical context for the sometimes nettlesome issue of Joseph Smith’s and other early Mormons’ participation in folk magic alongside more traditional Christian practice.

A deeper kind of magic occurs when prayer becomes sacrificial in nature, when the primary sentiment is surrender rather than self-centeredness: “Magical prayer asks for results, but sacrificial prayer asks for grace,

relinquishing the fruits” (74). Where magic seeks self-actualization, sacrificial prayer seeks self-transformation and transcendence. Sacrifice, whether substitutionary or actual, has multiple effects: “It communicates with the gods, discharges guilt, binds together the community, and forges communion between heaven and earth” (64). So central is sacrifice that Hindus believe that the world began through the fire sacrifice, the monotheistic traditions trace their beginnings to Abraham’s intended sacrifice of his son, and Christians place an act of sacrificial prayer—Jesus Christ’s Atonement—at the center of all history and salvation. Sacrificial prayer reaches its ritualistic height in temples where heaven and earth meet, but believers everywhere may also access the sacred by having their prayers assume the same sacrificial quality that characterizes temple worship.

Elements of magic and sacrifice intertwine in four archetypes of prayer laid out in part 2 of the book: the refugee, devotee, ecstatic, and contemplative. This is the heart of the book, exploring the multiple modes and dynamics of prayer through the voices and experiences of those who pray. The prayer of the refugee, the most common form, is “the prayer of those who seek shelter in God, flying to him for assistance, succor, or salvation” (97). Examples include virtually anyone who has ever looked heavenward and cried, “Help!” The authors focus their analysis with an eclectic set of case studies ranging from Robinson Crusoe to Samuel Johnson to Oscar Wilde to Bill Wilson (founder of Alcoholics Anonymous). The prayer of the devotee is “cyclical, regular, and routine, reiterated at set intervals throughout the day, week, or year.” Through it worshippers “quit profane time” and “enter sacred time,” stepping “from earth to heaven and back again” on a regular basis (129). Most religions have a form of this kind of prayer, such as the Christian Angelus or Muslim *salat*. Ecstatic prayer is incomprehensible, unpredictable, inexplicable, and overwhelming, yet still functional. Its exemplars include Sri Ramakrishna, the Hindu guru for whom the slightest catalyst would send him into a sometimes days-long rapture, and Saint Teresa of Avila, the sixteenth-century nun whose visions led her to write what became official Vatican policy for discriminating between heaven-sent visions and those produced by demons or self-deception. From its emergence in the twentieth century as the world’s fastest-growing religious phenomenon, Pentecostalism has taken ecstatic prayer to massive proportions. Contemplative prayer is the avenue to tasting ultimate reality, either in a full realization of this world or a transcendence of it. Less an event than a way of life, contemplation can range from the spiritual warfare of Saint Antony of the Desert, the third- and fourth-century ascetic who lived in perfect isolation in an empty fortress for twenty years, to the introspective and reverential haiku mastered by Basho.

The first half of the book is by far the more rewarding. The six chapters of the second half read more like a series of loosely connected vignettes when compared with the sustained and well-developed arguments of the earlier chapters. The tone becomes less analytical and more like the op-ed page, with the authors frequently inserting their own opinions and preferences. The three chapters of part 3, especially, are choppy, uneven, imprecise, and lacking in focus. The entire book concentrates too much on the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and Jewish, Christian, and Islamic traditions, but the second half is particularly egregious in its modern, Judeo-Christian, and Anglo-American imbalance. Eastern religions, including Buddhism and especially Hinduism, are prominent in the first half but then generally drop out. The book's most egregious shortcoming is its complete inattention to the world south of the equator. While the relative availability of written sources understandably moves the authors toward a fuller examination of the modern West, to completely neglect Latin America, Africa, and the South Pacific is inexplicable and inexcusable.

Despite its faults, *Prayer* is a valuable offering that provides a richer understanding of one of the central facets of human history and culture. Readers already given to prayer will undoubtedly be inspired by the many exemplars whose prayer lives are detailed in the book; although Latter-day Saints are never mentioned in the book, it nevertheless has great relevance for believers from any tradition who seek greater efficacy in accessing the divine. Skeptics will be forced to reckon with a phenomenon that, when properly seen, refuses to be reduced or marginalized by secular modernity. In the end, prayer can be truly known only through direct experience, and so any written evaluation of it is bound to come up short. As the authors acknowledge, "We can describe the visible world of prayer in sumptuous detail . . . but the most intimate dance between God and the soul occurs at a level beyond human perception" (354). The simultaneous accessibility and mystery of prayer means that even our best descriptions will be only approximations.

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1. See Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Scribner, 1971); Jon Butler, *Awash in a Sea of Faith: Christianizing the American People* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1990).

Jack D. Forbes. *The American Discovery of Europe*.
Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2007

Reviewed by John L. Sorenson

Jack D. Forbes, a scholar with Native American ancestry, has a long publishing history treating neglected topics that involve Native Americans (whom he calls simply “Americans”). In *The American Discovery of Europe*, Forbes weaves facts from recondite sources into a surprising story of Amerindian voyagers who reached Europe before conventional history opens with Columbus’s first voyage. He also documents the seizure by European slavers after 1492 of thousands of Americans who were carried to Europe and elsewhere.

Forbes makes a credible case that in about 1476 Columbus saw two people at Galway, Ireland, who had arrived by canoe from the West but whose language could not be understood. The man and woman were supposed to have come from “Cathay,” that is, East Asia. Presumably, they were accidentally carried from North America aided by the Gulf Stream. This encounter confirmed for young Columbus that Cathay could be reached by sailing west across the North Atlantic. Forbes uses considerable information about little-known late medieval mapmaking in Europe to bolster his case. (Other scholars, such as Gavin Menzies, are also currently discovering other data showing that the Atlantic and lands beyond it were within the purview of cartographers of that era.)

A long chapter sketches a fairly detailed picture of native boatbuilding and navigation, mainly in the Caribbean area. Conventional scholarship has neglected the considerable information extant on these matters; it is to Forbes’s credit that he draws attention to much of it. He acknowledges that much of the picture “must be reconstructed from the often fragmentary records left by early European observers or from archaeological and oral historical sources” (41).

Another chapter sheds light on relationships between the Inuit (Eskimo) people of Greenland and northeast North America and the Norse settlers there, especially on the kayaking skills shown by the former.

The mysterious “Finn-men” occasionally reported arriving from the West in the British Isles and even on the continent may well have been North Americans, as Forbes argues interestingly if not to the point of certainty.

Forbes deserves praise for the open-mindedness with which he entertains notions about transatlantic voyaging from America that are rarely accepted or even mentioned by orthodox historians. This position makes all the more disappointing his arbitrary shutting off of other interesting possibilities. For example, to him there is no possibility that Europeans using simple craft could successfully sail westward. Axiomatic acceptance of that viewpoint keeps him from even considering some contrary explanations for some of the dates he cites. In thus ruling out pre-Columbian voyages from east to west, he fails to acknowledge, let alone discuss, the substantial literature that reports a large number of modern voyages made in fragile, technologically unsophisticated craft that undercuts his notion that westward voyages across the North Atlantic were impossible.

While the book makes available a diverting set of neglected information, the work as a whole turns out to be less important. Nowhere does Forbes demonstrate that the journeys by Native Americans that he documents or conjectures had observable consequences for the history of either Europe or the voyagers’ homelands—historically, technologically, or genetically. *The American Discovery of Europe* is for readers of history like a tiny scene in a Brueghel painting, amusing to peruse briefly but not very significant for those who are concerned with the bigger picture.

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The Family in the New Millennium: World Voices Supporting the "Natural" Clan, 3 vols., edited by A. Scott Lovell and Thomas B. Holman (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2007). Vol. 1, *The Place of Family in Human Society*; vol. 2, *Marriage and Human Dignity*; vol. 3, *Strengthening the Family*.

The 2004 Doha International Conference for the Family yielded this collection of papers presented at venues around the world. If for no other reason, these volumes are valuable as proof that the family is a concern that unifies nations regardless of politics, religion, culture, and economic standing. And that proof gives hope to those of us who might otherwise despair at the rapid onslaught of antifamily forces.

The preface by Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, Consort of His Highness the Emir of Qatar and President of the Supreme Council for Family Affairs of Qatar, establishes some of this collection's basic themes. First, the family, as a school, plays an irreplaceable part in safeguarding "social stability and security" (1:ix). It is therefore critical that the family be recognized "as part of the solution rather than part of the problem" (1:x). For example, the family can prepare people who can dialog respectfully and rationally to forestall social disintegration and establish peace. Her Highness challenges the global society to cooperate in researching and adopting "references and standards that will safeguard the rights of the family and ensure its integration as an effective and constructive factor in all national, regional, and international development programs" (1.x).

This is high-minded rhetoric; however, it stems not from naïve optimism but from the urgency expressed in almost every article—that the natural

family must be actively safeguarded. To that end, the global community is called upon to create policies and practices that will buttress and enhance the family.

Based on some of "the finest available scholarship" (1:xiii), these papers detail the many trends weakening the family, from aging populations to family-punitive taxes to the below-replacement fertility rates of sixty-one countries. But the research does not stop there. The causal factors for these trends are explored, as are—and this is even more eye-opening—the ways these trends interact.

Where other books present only the problems (often in less depth), these volumes also present solutions and showcase countries that recognize the crisis and are establishing policies to counter threats to the family. It is heartening to learn that Latvians, for example, faced "the grim realities" of their "demographic catastrophe" (3:341–42). They have developed a sixty-step plan to increase the chances of family survival, including special tax incentives, housing credits, changes in the adoption policies, aid to dysfunctional families, and various subsidies.

Although scholarly, the papers are readable and interesting. They are organized so that each complements the papers around it, yet a person can dip in anywhere for an enlightening read.

—Doris R. Dant

A Twenty-Something's Guide to Spirituality: Questions You Hesitate to Ask, Answers You Rarely Hear, compiled by Jacob Werrett and David Read (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2007)

A Twenty-Something's Guide to Spirituality is a collection of ten essays by various Latter-day Saint authors

ranging from the late Elder Neal A. Maxwell to Truman G. Madsen, emeritus professor of philosophy at Brigham Young University. The subtitle, “Questions You Hesitate to Ask, Answers You Rarely Hear,” is a bit of a misnomer. The questions are actually asked over and over again by many adults in their twenties. Each chapter begins with a question, posed by a twenty-something Latter-day Saint, which raises issues that are then discussed for a few pages. The responses were selected and edited by two LDS law students, Jacob Werrett and David Read.

The book reads like a friendly dialogue—one could picture a group of people sitting around for lunch and discussing such topics. The questions are genuine and sincere, and the authors give sound and sage advice. The topics range from women in education to maintaining activity in the Church, and all are about important issues facing young adults in the Church today. Because of the question-and-answer format, it is easy to find an essay that will address a particular issue—a quick perusal of the question (no more than a page or two) yields the essence of the issue.

This book is ideally suited to young single adults or those who work closely with them. To anyone who is embarking on his or her college years, has a child who is doing so, or is in a young single adult bishopric, the essays and talks in this book will be valuable. As an example, in response to the question of how to choose between two good options, Virginia H. Pearce mentions Doctrine and Covenants 111, the Lord’s response to Joseph’s trip to Salem to find hidden treasure, as an example of how God can turn our bad (or even just not so good) choices into marvelous results. James Jardine talks about honesty in today’s competitive world, using

examples from his own life and from the character Sir Thomas More in the play *A Man for All Seasons*. Truman G. Madsen gives nine reasons to learn how to learn—not just going to school but actually understanding how to grapple with issues and continue learning as a lifelong pursuit. The answers to such questions will be a great aid to young adults and those around them.

—Carl Cranny

Critical Issues in American Religious History: A Reader, edited by Robert R. Mathisen, 2d rev. ed. (Waco, Texas: Baylor University Press, 2006)

In eight hundred pages filled with sixteen generally chronological chapters, each including several historical documents and various essays written by recognized authorities, this volume ambitiously attempts to comprehensively cover critical issues in American religious history from its colonization to 1980. But even such coverage is necessarily selective. From my LDS perspective, I noticed right away that chapter 5, on American religion in the early republic, is silent on the subject of early Mormonism. The essays in chapter 5 cover millennialism, Charles Finney, and Adventism. Each of these rich topics is deserving of its place, and each could be profitably compared with Joseph Smith and early Mormonism.

I hoped Mathisen would have let Joseph Smith speak for himself by featuring his brief 1832 history. Instead, Mormonism first appears in chapter 6, where Brigham Young’s 1845 statement announcing the exodus from Illinois is featured. Is not the Brigham Young document insignificant by comparison? Mormonism disappears again until the final chapter, where a slice of Sonia Johnson’s 1979 autobiography is featured. This feature of an obviously

divisive personality reminds me of a graduate school seminar in which one of my fellow students, a non-Mormon, compared Johnson's autobiography to her papers and found considerable dissonance between the two. The autobiography is a much sexier, embellished story. Why does Johnson's document get privileged?

It is a good thing that the Joseph Smith Papers are being prepared for publication. With increasingly high-profile Latter-day Saints in politics, national polls and publications are suggesting deep-seated fears and prejudices against Mormonism. All of this should compel us to consider one of the most critical issues in American religious history: the nature of revealed religion in a democracy (or the nature of democracy for believers in revealed religion). Those who want to know for themselves about these critical issues in American religious history will need alternative sources for their inquiry than this book.

—Steven C. Harper

Nineteenth-Century Saints at War, edited by Robert C. Freeman (Provo, Utah: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 2006)

Robert C. Freeman, director of the Saints at War project at Brigham Young University, and colleague Dennis A. Wright have published two previous volumes that focus on the experiences of Latter-day Saints during World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. This present publication focuses on the nineteenth-century wartime experiences of Latter-day Saints.

Nineteenth-Century Saints at War is a collaborative effort involving several scholars. Andrew C. Skinner provides an excellent analysis of Latter-day Saint

doctrines and principles as they pertain to war and peace. Larry C. Porter discusses Latter-day Saint involvement in the Mexican-American War. Lieutenant Colonel Sherman L. Fleek (United States Army, retired) provides an overview of the causes and the impact of the Utah War. David F. Boone writes about the Civil War, including Joseph Smith's prophecy of that war. James I. Mangum gives an interesting account of Latter-day Saints in the Spanish-American and Philippine Wars.

The editor provides a brief introduction to each war and also entertaining sidebars, which highlight significant individuals and places associated with each war. For example, one fascinating sidebar focuses on Charles Henry Wilcken, a former member of the Prussian Army who arrived in the United States in 1857 and joined Johnston's Army. Captured by Lot Smith's cavalry in Wyoming, Wilcken eventually joined the Church and went on to serve as a bodyguard for two Church presidents (89).

Notes at the end of each chapter will lead the interested reader to further reading. The book is well illustrated with over forty photographs and paintings. Many readers will likely be unfamiliar with the interesting artwork, which comes from both museums and private collections.

This work provides a good overview of the nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint wartime experience in one convenient volume. It succeeds in placing the Church experience against the broader American experience as it relates to war.

—J. Michael Hunter

Nauvoo: Mormon City on the Mississippi River, by Raymond Bial (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2006)

Although only forty-four pages, Raymond Bial's well-written children's history *Nauvoo: Mormon City on the Mississippi River* is much more than a history of Nauvoo. Bial, who is also an accomplished photographer, has illustrated the book with his own lavish photographs that capture the essence of "the city beautiful" and its surroundings.

Bial does not limit his history to a discussion of Nauvoo; in a few short pages, he addresses the broader sweep of early LDS history, including the First Vision, the founding of the Church, the subsequent development of the Church in Kirtland, the Missouri persecutions and the expulsion of the Saints, and the early settlement of Nauvoo. Bial's summary of the Book of Mormon narrative is particularly well done, as is his discussion of Church teachings and doctrines. Apart from a few minor errors, his history is accurate, and he relates the events leading to the settlement of Nauvoo in a compelling manner.

Following the persecution of the Saints in Missouri, the Prophet Joseph, as quoted by Bial, wanted nothing more than to "find a resting place for a little season at least" (19); and this, the author suggests, they found in Nauvoo. Anxious to accommodate the Missouri refugees as well as new converts from the British Isles, Joseph Smith acquired "large parcels of land" (20) and had the marshy swamps or "flats" drained. The city grew quickly, and by 1844 Nauvoo had become one of the largest communities in Illinois.

The author characterizes Nauvoo as "a small kingdom tucked in the western corner of the state" of Illinois (24).

Most homes were built of logs; approximately two hundred structures, however, were built of the characteristic red brick. Particularly interesting is Bial's discussion of Nauvoo's artisans and craftsmen whose shops are the subject of many of his photographs. He captures the thriving nature of Nauvoo and its citizens, mentioning such people as Jonathan Browning, who "invented one of the earliest repeating rifles" (23), and whose gunsmith shop was located on the city's Main Street. Bial's discussion of the Relief Society organization in the Prophet Joseph's Red Brick Store, the Pendleton Log School on Kimball Street, and the Seventies Hall that housed the Nauvoo library contribute to a complete portrait of community life in the Latter-day Saint city.

As suggested by Bial, the most "ambitious undertaking" for the Saints in Nauvoo was the construction of the temple. Bial relates the history of the temple's construction as well as its subsequent destruction by fire and tornado. The author also recounts, in poignant detail, the murder of the Prophet Joseph Smith, the persecution of the Saints, and their final exodus in 1845 and 1846. Bial emphasizes the palpable sense of loss experienced by the Saints who were forced to abandon their homes. As stated by Bathsheba Smith: "My last act in that precious spot was to tidy the rooms, sweep up the floor, and set the broom in its accustomed place behind the door. Then with emotions in my heart . . . I gently closed that door and faced an unknown future" (35).

In 1849, several years following the departure of the Latter-day Saints from Nauvoo, the Icarians, "followers of the French philosopher Etienne Cabet" (41), established a utopian community in Nauvoo, and Bial tells the story of their efforts to create a home

for themselves in the former city of the Saints. The author also discusses the 1860 establishment of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in the Midwest, and efforts by Emma, the Prophet Joseph's widow, to create a new life for herself in Nauvoo.

Bial goes on to accurately summarize the history and growth of the LDS Church in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Appropriately enough, he brings the story full circle and concludes his history with a discussion of efforts, beginning in the 1960s, to restore Nauvoo. The author of several children's histories, Bial has written an even-handed yet very sympathetic and moving history of Nauvoo. His book is appropriate not only for children but for anyone new to LDS history.

—John M. Murphy

The Politics of Jesus: Rediscovering the True Revolutionary Nature of the Teachings of Jesus and How They Have Been Corrupted, by Obery M. Hendricks Jr. (New York: Doubleday, 2006)

Obery Hendricks Jr. is a professor of biblical interpretation at the New York Theological Seminary and an ordained minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church. As a young man, Hendricks withdrew himself from Christian religions; his discovery of what he calls the "revolutionary Jesus" brought him back.

This book analyzes Jesus' teachings in light of the social, economic, and political conditions of his day. From this analysis, Hendricks outlines and explains seven political strategies that Jesus employed, namely: treat the people's needs as holy, give a voice to the voiceless, expose the workings of oppression, call the demon by name, save your anger for the mistreatment of others, take blows without returning

them, and do not just explain the alternative but show it. In the latter half of his book, he applies these political strategies as well as his own personal opinions to analyze and criticize current political practices in the United States.

For readers interested in a non-LDS perspective of the role of Jesus and other biblical prophets as political revolutionaries, this book will be especially interesting. In particular, the political critic who appreciates new, contemporary, even controversial views of Jesus' politics and their application in the world today will be rewarded.

—Saul A. Speirs

Astronomy, Papyrus, and Covenant, ed. John Gee and Brian M. Hauglid, volume 3 in *Studies on the Book of Abraham* (FARMS: Provo, Utah, 2005)

This volume's twelve articles analyze the Book of Abraham, contributing significantly to needed research on this scripture. Most of the articles were presented at a FARMS conference in 1999 and are published now for the first time. Here serious scholarly study of the Book of Abraham is made accessible to nonspecialists. Topics covered include the historicity of the Book of Abraham, meanings and symbols in covenants, and literary aspects of the text.

The first two articles deal with astronomy in the Book of Abraham. John Gee, William Hamblin, and Daniel Peterson combine to argue skillfully, on six grounds, that the view of stars and of the heavens found in the Book of Abraham is completely at home in the geocentric cosmic view that held sway from the time of the Egyptians down to the time of Copernicus, before the worldview became dominated by a heliocentric cosmology. J. Ward Moody, professor of physics

and astronomy, and Michael Rhodes, professor of ancient scripture, successfully bring their two worlds together in "Astronomy and the Creation." This very interesting article offers a satisfying understanding of the processes and duration of the creation that fits both modern science and the scriptural accounts, including comments on evolution and the seven creative periods in Abraham 4.

Studies by E. Douglas Clark and Jared W. Ludlow build on pseudepigraphic works such as the *Genesis Apocryphon* and the *Apocalypse of Abraham*, and Peter Nadig analyzes sources relevant to the Jewish experience in Egypt during the Persian and Ptolemaic periods, in order to draw symbolic and cultural comparisons with phrases or materials relevant as ancient Jewish backgrounds to the Book of Abraham.

The next section of the book discusses the Joseph Smith papyri. John Gee argues convincingly that Facsimile 3 and the Book of the Dead 125 are not parallel images, leaving open the task of looking for its real parallels. The article "The Facsimiles and Semitic Adaptation of Existing Sources" by Kevin Barney begins with the important acknowledgement that the papyrus Joseph Smith held in his hand was not the very papyrus touched by the hand of Abraham but had been copied over time. This allows for the possibility of intervening redactors who may be credited with the introduction of "Semitic adaptations" that transformed older themes in an underlying stratum of the writings of Abraham. Barney's theory places the final form of the Book of Abraham facsimiles where they belong textually—centuries after Abraham wrote his original text.

The concluding articles in this collection relate the Book of Abraham to

Muslim traditions about Abraham, to covenant aspects of women under the Abrahamic covenant, to the Israelite theology of redemption, and finally to American receptions of Abraham in the first half of the nineteenth century.

This nicely bound and edited volume should find a welcome place not just on the shelves of libraries but in the minds of all serious students of the Book of Abraham. This work is an excellent resource for beginning and longtime scripture scholars. It continues many ongoing conversations and opens several new points of inquiry. As its editors state, no attempt has been made "to harmonize the various viewpoints and interpretations expressed in these articles." These differences not only illustrate "the variety of interpretations of scripture that can come from a common background of faith" (viii), but also ensure that this book will add significantly to the growing body of scholarly literature about the Book of Abraham.

—Jennifer Hurlbut