

In Defense of Doubt

Prepared by invitation for LDS Church Historian, Elder Kyle S. McKay

Elder McKay, I was recently visited by my Stake President, who also happens to be my Father-in-law, and asked if the two of you could come to my home and visit with me about church history. I was told that I could ask you any question. Until now, I have never attempted to openly discuss my doubts. For good reason. I have witnessed firsthand, just this week, that the reaction from believing members can often be emotionally volatile. Especially within families. I am not now, nor have I ever, tried to convince anyone to leave the church, despite accusations to the contrary. I have no animosity towards the church, and I celebrate the good that it does in the world. It has been a blessing in my life. I do however feel that doubt is a reasonable position. And that those of us that have arrived at this place, did so with integrity. To help organize my thoughts and facilitate a worthwhile discussion, I have created this document. This is my defense of doubt. I will admit, its longer than I anticipated. I guess we will see how far we get. Much of what I will present could be viewed as critical, but I assure you, it is in no way intended to be disrespectful. Ralph Waldo Emerson gave sound advice for all of us when he said, *"Let me never fall into the vulgar mistake of dreaming that I am persecuted whenever I am contradicted."*

Jeffrey R. Holland rhetorically challenged members of the church experiencing doubt, to account for the origin of the Book of Mormon. He said, *"If anyone is foolish enough or misled enough to reject 531 pages of a heretofore unknown text teeming with literary and Semitic complexity without honestly attempting to account for the origin of those pages.... then such a person, elect or otherwise, has been deceived; and if he or she leaves this Church, it must be done by crawling over or under or around the Book of Mormon to make that exit."*

In response to Elder Holland's statement, I will 'honestly attempt to account for the origin of those pages' and use contemporary historical records to do so. First, I would describe Joseph Smith as a gifted storyteller and a 'charismatic eclecticist'. That is, Joseph would take the objects, mysteries, and religious discussions of his day, and repurpose them within a single religious framework. Second, I will attempt show that the church has demonstrated a pattern of retroactively changing, and or hiding, the historical records to fit a new and emerging narrative.

*Records show that Joseph Smith was known to possess a magical world view and was actively involved in using a seer stone to look for buried treasure. Joseph would place the seer stone in a hat and the location of the treasure would then be revealed. The practice itself was illegal. Church historian Steven E. Snow notes that, *"By 1825, young Joseph had a reputation in Manchester and Palmyra for his activities as a treasure seer, or someone who used a seer stone to locate gold or other valuable objects buried in the earth."* Joseph Smith conducted at least eighteen treasure digs between 1822-1827, and **in 1826 was put on trial and found guilty of fraud for it.** This case was brought by Peter Bridgeman, after watching Joseph Smith's methods in being the "seer" of the money digging party. LDS scholar Hugh Nibley wrote in his book *The Myth Makers* that "if this court record is authentic, it is the most damning evidence in existence against Joseph Smith" and that it would be "the most devastating blow to Smith ever delivered." Some modern historians have put the total number of treasure digs that Joseph was involved in at forty-one. In each case treasure was never found. It is a documented fact that Joseph Smith began his career by breaking the law, committing fraud, and using a seer stone in a hat, to find treasure that did not exist, and charged people to do it.

In 1823, an angel supposedly introduced the concept of a written record buried in a nearby hill. That story fits perfectly within context of Joseph's treasure digging activities and magical world view. The contemporary historical record points to a natural evolution, from

Joseph's treasure digging, to the story of buried records, and finally culminating with the emergence of the Book of Mormon. What is conspicuously absent in that evolution is an appearance from God. I will get to that later.

Joseph would have had nearly seven years to fabricate a story. His own mother Lucy Mack Smith wrote that Joseph would spend evenings telling stories to his family about the characters, concepts, and ideas contained in the book, beginning as early as 1823. Even though he would not claim to gain access to an actual record until 1827. Lucy wrote, *"During our evening conversations, Joseph would occasionally give us some of the most amusing recitals that could be imagined, he would describe the ancient inhabitants of this continent, their dress, mode of traveling, and the animals upon which they rode; their cities, their buildings, with every particular; their mode of warfare; and also, their religious worship. **This he would do with as much ease, seemingly, as if he had spent his whole life with them.**"*

* Joseph Smith dictated the Book of Mormon by placing a stone in a hat, and then reading the words that would appear on the stone. At times the supposed plates were not even in the room. It is worth noting that this is the same stone that Joseph used for treasure digging. Much of the original doctrine and covenants was received using this same manner. Renowned LDS historian, Richard Bushman, said the following: *"I will begin by saying that we still have pictures on our Ward bulletin boards of Joseph Smith with the Gold Plates in front of him. That has become an irksome point and I think it is something the church should pay attention to. Because anyone who studies the history knows that is not what happened. **There is no church historian who says that is what happened and yet it is being propagated by the church** and it feeds into the notion that the church is trying to cover up embarrassing episodes and is sort of prettifying its own history. So, I think we ought to just stop that immediately. I am not sure we need a lot of pictures in our chapels of Joseph looking into his hat, but we certainly should tell our children that is how it worked.... It also raises the strange question, 'What in the world are the plates for? Why do we need them on the table if they are just wrapped up into a cloth while he looks into a seer stone?'"*

The Book of Mormon was published in 1830. Seven years after Joseph first introduced the idea. A study of contemporary literature can demonstrate that not a single concept contained in the Book of Mormon, or for that matter LDS theology, is truly unique. A majority can be found in the written records available to Joseph at the time he introduced them. The biblical passages found in the Book of Mormon can be shown to come directly from the specific King James Bible owned by the Smith family, containing all the known mistakes and anachronisms inherent in that book.

Richard Bushman had this to say [about early 1800s literature found in the Book of Mormon](#): *"... there is phrasing everywhere—long phrases that if you google them you will find them in 19th century writings. The theology of the Book of Mormon is very much 19th century theology, and it reads like a 19th century understanding of the Hebrew Bible as an Old Testament. **The Book of Mormon has a lot of 19th century Protestant material in it, both in terms of theology, and of wording. I am looking for an explanation of how and why it is there.**"*

Grant Hardy, [a foremost LDS Scholar on the Book of Mormon](#) wrote *"The Isaiah we see in the Book of Mormon is not what we would expect to see from someone who came from Jerusalem in 600BC."* LDS historian Patrick Mason recognizes the overwhelming evidence of the 19th century influence found in the Book of Mormon and has stated publicly that he is *"perfectly comfortable with Joseph Smith being **an active participant in the***

creation and composition of the Book of Mormon". In summary, evidence of a 19th century author is littered throughout the text.

* By the mid 1830s, in what can reasonably be seen as an attempt to add credibility for Joseph, a new origin story began to take shape. It's one thing to successfully find an ancient, buried treasure with your seer stone, it's an entirely different thing, if God appeared to you and commanded you to start a church. The First Vision story was not recorded in a single historical document until twelve years after the event supposedly took place. That version was recorded in Joseph's private journal and was not shared with anyone. It was discovered by church leadership sometime in the early 20th century. One of the few people with access, cut and removed that page from Joseph's original journal. It was taped back into the journal sometime around 1960. The individual thought most likely to be responsible for the removal, is Joseph Fielding Smith. He served as official Church Historian, apostle, and church president.

Former Assistant Church Historian James B. Allen had this to say about the First Vision: *"There is little if any evidence, however, that by the early 1830's Joseph Smith was telling the story in public. At least if he were telling it, **no one seemed to consider it important enough to have recorded it at the time, and no one was criticizing him for it.** Not even in his own history did Joseph Smith mention being criticized in this period for telling the story of the first vision... The fact that **none of the available contemporary writings about Joseph Smith in the 1830's, none of the publications of the Church in that decade, and no contemporary journal or correspondence yet discovered mentions the story of the first vision** is convincing evidence that at best it received only limited circulation in those early days."*

Compare the documented historical facts, with what the church currently teaches, and from what Joseph himself said, in his own history eighteen years later. *"I soon found, however, that my **telling the story had excited a great deal of prejudice against me among professors of religion, and was the cause of great persecution, which continued to increase; and though I was obscure boy, only between fourteen and fifteen years of age, and my circumstances in life such as to make a boy of no consequence in the world, yet men of high standing would take notice sufficient to excite the public mind against me, and create a bitter persecution; and this was common among all the sects—all united to persecute me***". See Appendix.

The absence of the first vision account in the historical records makes no theological sense. As Gordon B. Hinckley declared, *"Our whole strength rests on the validity of that [First] vision. It either occurred or it did not occur. If it did not, then this work is a fraud. If it did, then it is the most important and wonderful work under the heavens."* Why would the single most important event of the last 2,000 years not receive a single mention during the first twelve years of its occurrence, and then not be made public for another six?

The 1832 first vision account contained a description of God that is consistent with the theological view of the Godhead that is found in all early church documents. Namely the trinitarian/modalist view where God and Jesus are the same person. The 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon, The 1833 edition of Book of Commandments, the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants with the Lectures on Faith, among others, all point to this modalistic view.

The Lectures on faith, printed in 1835 and used as the textbook for the "school of the prophets" states, *"There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things — by whom all things were created and made... They are the Father and the Son: **The Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power:***

possessing all perfection and fullness: **The Son**, who was in the bosom of the Father, a **personage of tabernacle**, made and fashioned like unto man."

The official church publication "The Evening & Morning Star", stated in July 1832: "Now what things can there be of greater moment and importance for men to know, or God to reveal, than the nature of God. The Scriptures discover not only matters of importance, but of the greatest depth and mysteriousness. There are many wonderful things in the law of God, things we may admire, but are never able to comprehend. Such are the eternal purposes and decrees of God, **the doctrine of the Trinity**, the incarnation of the Son of God, and the manner of the operation of the Spirit of God upon the souls of men." The worst-case scenario is that Joseph himself wrote that. The best-case scenario is that someone in church leadership in 1832 still believed in, and was bearing testimony of, the doctrine of the Trinity.

As Joseph's first vision evolved, the concept of the Godhead changed, when the concept of the Godhead changed, it became inconsistent with the scriptural record, so the scriptural record was changed. One example is 1st Nephi chapter eleven, changing from "Behold, the Lamb of God, yea, even the Eternal Father!", to "Behold, the Lamb of God, yea, even the son of the Eternal Father!" All this data lends credence to the idea that the First Vision as we know it, was a fabrication and late addition to LDS theology. █

*This pattern continued with the priesthood. Joseph's ecclesiastical authority was challenged repeatedly by other church leaders beginning in 1831 and culminating in 1838. The evolution of his own priesthood authority evolves parallel to those challenges. The concept of priesthood authority and the distinct divisions of Melchizedek and Aaronic priesthood with their assigned offices, does not appear in any contemporary historical document or revelation. But they are retroactively written into the scriptural account six years after they supposedly occurred, and then backdated in those records. The first documentation of any priesthood ordination was Lyman Wight ordaining Joseph Smith to the high priesthood in June of 1831, two years too late.

Richard Bushman wrote, "**the late appearance of these accounts raises the possibility of later fabrication**". He goes on to add, "Did Joseph add the stories of angels to embellish his early history and make himself more of a visionary? If so, he made little of the occurrence. Cowdery was the first to recount the story of John's appearance, not Joseph himself." ... "He revised his own revelations, adding new material and splicing one to another, **altering the wording as he saw fit**. He felt authorized to expand the revelations as his understanding expanded."

Early Church Historian BH Roberts said: "...**there is no definite account of the [Melchizedek Priesthood restoration] event in the history of the Prophet Joseph, or, for that matter, in any of our annals**...". While apologists have worked to narrow the timeline, there is also no recorded date for the restoration of the priesthood or visits from John the Baptist. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses said, "*I never heard that an Angel had ordained Joseph and Oliver to the Aaronic Priesthood until the year 1834[,] [183]5. or [183]6—in Ohio... I do not believe that John the Baptist ever ordained Joseph and Oliver.*"

Once again, we see the pattern of retroactively changing the historical record to fit a new and emerging narrative. But the most frustrating aspect of it, is that the Church acts as if it never happened. Elder Hugh B Brown said. "**None of the early revelations of the Church have been revised, and the Doctrine and Covenants stands as printed including sections 5 and 7.**" Elder Boyd K Packer stated, "Of course there have been changes and corrections. Anyone who has done even limited research knows that. When properly reviewed, such corrections become a testimony for, not against, the truth of the books.... Now, I add with

emphasis that such changes have been basically minor refinements in grammar, expression, punctuation, or clarification. **Nothing fundamental has been altered.**" Compare those statements with the images in the Appendix.

*In 1835 Joseph Smith found himself in possession of four Egyptian mummies, and multiple scrolls of papyrus. At the time, no one in the known world had yet to successfully translate Egyptian Hieroglyphics. Due to Joseph's reputation as a translator, it was assumed that he could. Joseph began the process of translating the Papyrus, and immediately declared that they were the writings of the Prophets Abraham, and Joseph of Egypt. As he himself would write, *"with W. W. Phelps and Oliver Cowdery as scribes, I commenced the translation of some of the characters or hieroglyphics, and much to our joy found that one of the scrolls contained the writings of Abraham, another the writings of Joseph of Egypt – a more full account of which will appear in its place, as I proceed to examine or unfold them. Truly we can say, the Lord is beginning to reveal the abundance of peace and truth"*. Joseph's journal entries show that he was translating the papyrus in the most traditional sense. The result was the addition of a newly canonized book of LDS scripture, The Book of Abraham.

The problems began early. In 1856 Egyptologist Gustav Seyffarth looked at the Book of Abraham and declared the translation was incorrect. As Egyptology has continued to grow from its infancy in the 1800s, to the respected scientific branch of archaeology that it is today, Egyptologists can look at the facsimiles and papyrus fragments, and immediately identify them as common funeral texts with absolutely no connection to Abraham.

The LDS Gospel Topics essay on the Book of Abraham admits: **"None of the characters on the papyrus fragments mentioned Abraham's name or any of the events recorded in the book of Abraham. Mormon and non-Mormon Egyptologists agree that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham.... these fragments date to between the third century B.C.E. and the first century C.E., long after Abraham lived"**.

Some apologists suggest that the original Egyptian source material is missing. Others say that papyrus was a catalyst for revelation. Both theories are impossible to reconcile once you see that the verses clearly show that the text of the Book of Abraham is coming directly from the facsimiles. One example of this is Abraham 1:12-14 and facsimile 3. "And it came to pass that the priests laid violence upon me, that they might slay me also, as they did those virgins upon this altar; and that you may have a knowledge of this altar, I will refer you to the representation at the commencement of this record."

This fits the pattern of the charismatic eclecticist. Egyptomania was sweeping the country, a roadshow with Egyptian artifacts came to town, and everyone looked to Joseph for answers. So, what did he do? He took a common Egyptian funeral text, and said it was an ancient book of scripture. A book that specifically discussed priesthood authority at the exact time that Joseph's own authority was being challenged. No one knew then, what everyone knows now. That is, "that the characters on the fragments do not match the translation given in the book of Abraham."

*One year before Joseph obtained the mummies, he led roughly 200 men known as "Zions Camp" from Ohio to Missouri. He described the journey in a letter to his wife. *"The whole of our journey, in the midst of so large a company of social honest and sincere men, wandering over the plains of the Nephites, recounting occasionally the history of the Book of Mormon, roving over the mounds of that once beloved people of the Lord, picking up their skulls & their bones, as a proof of its divine authenticity, and gazing upon a country the fertility, the splendour and the goodness so indescribable, all serves to pass*

away time unnoticed” On June 3, 1834, while camped on a bluff above the Illinois river, some of the men discovered bones in a native American burial mound. John Taylor, future president of the church, who was one of four eyewitness to the record the event, published this in the Times and Seasons.

“On the top of the mound were stones which presented the appearance of three alters having been erected one above the other, according to ancient order; and human bones were strewn over the surface of the ground. The brethren procured a shovel and hoe, and removing the earth to the depth of about one foot discovered skeleton of a man, almost entire, and between his ribs was a Lamanitish arrow which evidently produced his death, Elder Brigham Young retained the arrow and the brethren carried some pieces of the skeleton to Clay county. The contemplation of the scenery before us produced peculiar sensations in our bosoms; and the visions of the past being opened to my understandings by the spirit of the Almighty I discovered that the person whose skeleton was before us, was a white Lamanite, a large thick set man, and a man of God. He was a warrior and chieftain under the great prophet Omandagus, who was known from the hill Cumorah, or Eastern Sea, to the Rocky Mountains. His name was Zelph. The curse was taken from him, or at least in part; one of his thigh bones was broken, by a stone flung from a sling while in battle years before his death. He was killed in battle, by the arrow found among his ribs, during the last great struggle of the Lammanites and Nephites.”

Once again Joseph demonstrates himself as a gifted storyteller and charismatic eclecticist. He is literally picking up the bones from a Hopewell burial mound and repurposing them into his religious framework. Later carbon dating from archeologists have conclusively identified that the bones in that mound all date to between 90 and 100 CE. The period of universal peace mentioned in the Book of Mormon.

*But that would not be the last ancient altar discovered by Joseph. In 1838 Joseph and a group of men visited his friend and church leader Lyman Wight on his homestead on the Grand River in Missouri. They explored the area to determine if it could serve as place that the members of Far West could relocate and settle due to the current conflict. It just so happened that as they surveyed the area Joseph *“placed his back against a small shade tree,”* and then looking toward heaven said, *“It does not take me long to get a revelation from heaven that this was the exact location of “Adam-ondi-Ahman”*. This was a familiar phrase that Joseph had already introduced to the saints as the location that Adam, previous to his death, called his children together and blessed them. As well as the location that Adam, Christ, and all major prophets will return prior to the saviors second coming. While exploring, a stone structure was located on a nearby hill. The people that were with Joseph that time, recall him identifying it as an altar use by Adam and the Nephites.

Two future prophets would later recall that Joseph also identified the literal Garden of Eden was also located nearby. Brigham Young stated, *“Joseph the Prophet told me that the garden of Eden was in Jackson County Missouri.”* Heber C. Kimball said: *“From the Lord, Joseph learned that Adam had dwelt on the land of America, and that the Garden of Eden was located where Jackson County now is.”* Once again, we see Joseph taking common things from his environment, identifying them as part of an ancient order, and repurposing them within his own religious framework.

*The Temperance Movement and the public debate it created discussing abstaining from alcohol, smoking, tea, coffee, and eating a diet mainly of grains health codes was common by the late 1820s. *Simplicity of Health*, published in 1829, elaborates on every item in the Word of Wisdom. *Means of Preserving Health* was published in 1806 and contains nearly every item discussed in the of the Word of Wisdom: avoidance of alcohol, coffee, tea,

and tobacco and sparing use of meat, as well as eating fruits in season. *The Journal of Health*, published in Philadelphia, August 25, 1830, also contains every aspect of the Word of Wisdom. On February 26th the citizens of Kirtland had observed “The National Day of Temperance”. On February 27th, the very next day, Joseph Smith received the revelation known today as the word of wisdom. It reads like it was taken directly out of one of the previously mentioned health journals.

Again, we see pattern of Joseph taking something common, and repurposing it within his own religious framework. Many members today would be surprised to learn that the historical records clearly show that Joseph Smith consumed alcohol up until the day he died. The following is just one example, from an entry in Joseph’s own journal; “At one, p.m., I rode out with Dr. Richards and O.P. Rockwell. Called on Davis at the boat. Paid Manhard \$90. Met George J. Adams and paid him \$50. Then went to John P. Greene’s and paid him and another brother \$200. **Drank a glass of beer at Moessers.** Called at William Clayton’s, while Dr. Richards and O.P. Rockwell called at the Doctor’s new house. Returned home at 4 ½ p.m.”. The sentence in bold that mentions beer, was removed when the journal was published as part of correlated books known as “The History of the Church”. By studying the actual historical records surrounding The Word of Wisdom, not only do we see Joseph’s pattern of charismatic eclecticism, but we also see the church hiding history that does not fit within its current narrative.

*During this same time, Joseph was involved in behavior that by many standards would be considered dishonest, and by most, immoral. In 1833, Joseph Smith then twenty-seven, had a polygamous/extramarital relationship with Fanny Alger, age sixteen, who was the live-in maid for the Smith family. Oliver Cowdery described it as a “A dirty, nasty, filthy affair.” Joseph Smith’s own son recalls his mother Emma’s version of the event, as it was shared with him “one night she (Emma) missed Joseph and Fanny Alger. She went to the barn and saw him and Fanny in the barn together alone. She looked through a crack and saw the transaction. She told me this story too was verily true.” The church claims this was a marriage, but no marriage records exist, and the only mention of a marriage comes sixty years after the event.

The church’s own essay contends the following: “*Fragmentary evidence suggests that Joseph Smith acted on the angel’s first command by marrying a plural wife, Fanny Alger, in Kirtland, Ohio, in the mid-1830s. Several Latter-day Saints who had lived in Kirtland reported decades later that Joseph Smith had married Alger, who lived and worked in the Smith household, after he had obtained her consent and that of her parents.*” Assuming that’s true; 1) It was done without Emma’s knowledge. 2) It was against the law. 3) It was forbidden in the current church teachings, and 4) Joseph had yet to receive any of the sealing keys associated with marriage.

By 1841 Joseph was engaged in polygamy and polyandry in Nauvoo with dozens of women. From the church’s essay: “*Following his marriage to Louisa Beaman and before he married other single women, Joseph Smith was sealed to a number of women who were already married.*” Todd Compton puts the number of women at eleven polyandrous wives.

The church often frames polyandry as if Joseph Smith is saving women from bad marriages. The reality, however, is that many of these women were married to faithful, active members of the church. In fact, one of them was married to an apostle. This is a direct violation of D&C 132, which is clear that these men are only to espouse virgins. Some will argue unsuccessfully that these relationships were not sexual. That concept is in direct violation of God’s only justification for polygamy which is to “raise up a righteous seed” as stated in the Book of Mormon.

In 1842 Joseph Smith, acting as Prophet, stated publicly, ***"Inasmuch as this church of Christ has been reproached with the crime of fornication, and polygamy: we declare that we believe, that one man should have one wife; and one woman, but one husband, except in case of death, when either is at liberty to marry again...We have given the above rule of marriage as the only one practiced in this church"*** At the time that statement was published Joseph had 20 wives.

In 1843 Joseph dictated a revelation to William Clayton on polygamy (D&C 132). Again, by this point was already married to twenty other women, with Emma being completely unaware of most of them. When the church's correlated book "Saints" states, ***"including a few whom Emma had personally selected,"*** what they don't tell you, is that Emma Smith chose only four women for Joseph to marry. Of those four, Joseph had already been married to two of them: a pair of sisters who were living in the Smith family home. The language in the revelation towards Emma is harsh, with the threat of destruction if she did not abide by the revelation. ***"But if she will not abide this commandment she shall be destroyed, saith the Lord; for I am the Lord thy God and will destroy her if she abides not in my law."*** It's worth noting that the Law of Sarah, mentioned in verse 61, is not only completely contradicted in verse 65, but that D&C 132 labels the woman who does not consent as the 'transgressor.'

By the time of Joseph's death, he was sealed to between 30 and 40 women with the youngest being fourteen years old, and again, eleven women that were already married. Joseph told some of these young women that an "Angel with a drawn sword" would destroy him if they did not consent to joining him in polygamy. Of all the times in the history of the church that God could have intervened in the lives of mankind, by sending an angel with a sword, remember, this is the one that God chose. All of this was done in secret, while denying polygamy to the general church membership, without the knowledge of the husbands, and up to thirty-six wives unknown to his wife Emma. Patrick Mason recently said, ***"a lot of that looks a whole lot like sin.... sexual behaviors that I find deeply disturbing."*** Speaking hypothetically about the possibility of having his own teenage daughter married to Joseph Smith, Mason said, ***"Had he (Joseph) approached me about that (polygamy) I hope I would have said no."***

In a declaration on May 26th, 1844, Joseph stated ***"What a thing it is for a man to be accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives, when I can only find one."*** Two weeks after that statement was given, the "Nauvoo Expositor" was published. The information that was contained in that document, though critical of Joseph Smith, contained no known factual errors. Joseph ordered the destruction and burning of the printing press as well as all printed papers. It was for this reason that Joseph was arrested and placed in the Carthage Jail.

It was not until 2012 that the church officially published a somewhat historically accurate account of Joseph's polygamy. 180 years after the fact. In 2023 it is not uncommon to find an active member that still believes that Joseph was never involved in polygamy, with even more members in denial of his polyamory.

*There is perhaps no better example of Joseph Smith's eclectic repurposing of his surroundings than the LDS Endowment. Joseph Smith was a member of the Masonic lodge and was initiated as a 'Master Mason' himself in Nauvoo, Illinois. He wrote in his journal on March 16. ***"I was with the Masonic Lodge and rose to the sublime degree."*** The Church itself now teaches, ***"Masonry wasn't new to the thousands of Latter-day Saint converts already living in and around Nauvoo at the time. Eventually, over 1,500 members of the church were listed as freemasons in Nauvoo alone, more than in all the rest of Illinois."*** Joseph Smith

introduced select members of the church to the newly created endowment ceremony in May 1842, just seven weeks after being initiated as a 'Master Mason' himself.

It appears evident that Joseph Smith took the signs, tokens, penalties, symbols, washing and anointing, new name, and clothing from the Masonic ceremony. From its introduction in 1842 until today, the church has consistently explained away those overwhelming similarities to Masonry with the idea that masonry was a corrupt and apostate endowment. Brigham young explained, *"We have the true Masonry. **The Masonry of today is received from the apostasy which took place in the days of Solomon, and David.** They have now and then a thing that is correct, but we have the real thing."* That concept is problematic since historians now universally agree that the Masonic ceremony began about 2,000 years after Solomon's Temple existed, and that temple was focused almost entirely on animal sacrifice.

*Some Historians have genuinely tried to be more open and honest. Church president Heber J. Grant required B. H. Roberts to censor some documents when compiling the History of the Church. Elder Roberts responded. *"I desire, however, to take this occasion of disclaiming any responsibility for the **mutilating of that very important part of President Young's Manuscript**, and also to say, that while you had the physical power of eliminating that passage from the History, I do not believe you had any moral right to do so."*

Steven Snow, LDS church historian said, *"**I think in the past there was a tendency to keep a lot of the records closed or at least not give access to information.** But the world has changed in the last generation with the access to information on the Internet, we can't continue that with that pattern; I think we need to continue to be more open."*

In 2016 Richard Bushman was recorded saying. *"I think for the Church to remain strong it has to reconstruct its narrative. **The dominant narrative is not true.** It can't be sustained. The Church has to absorb all this new information, or it will be on very shaky grounds, and that's what it's trying to do. And that'll be a strain for a lot of people, older people especially. He later clarified those comments "we must be willing to modify the account according to newly authenticated facts. If we don't, we will weaken our position.... The whole church, from top to bottom, has had to adjust to the findings of our historians."*

It would appear however, that current church leadership disagrees. In 2017, one year after Richard Bushman's statement, M. Russell Ballard and Dallin H. Oaks said the following: *"Some are saying that the Church has been hiding the fact that there's more than one version of the First Vision, which is just not true. The facts are, **we don't study. We don't go back and search what has been said on the subject....** But it's this idea that the Church is hiding something, which we would have to say...**there has been no attempt on the part, in any way, of the Church leaders trying to hide anything from anybody.... So, just trust us** wherever you are in the world. And you share this message with anyone else who raises the question about the Church not being transparent. **We're as transparent as we know how to be in telling the truth.**"* Speaking to married couples just two years later, Elder Oaks had this to add, *"matters of church history and doctrinal issues have led some spouses to inactivity. Some spouses wonder how to best go about researching and responding to such issues. "I suggest that **research is not the answer**"*.

The implications of those statements are profound. In short, church leaders have never hidden *"in any way....anything.... ever, from anybody"*, and if a member has concerns or doubts about church history, it's because *"**we don't study. We don't go back and search what has been said on the subject**"*, but then immediately contradicting themselves with.... *"trust us" **research is not the answer***". What better evidence can you get from someone

that their position is weak, or that they are hiding something, than having them ask you not to research it?

There is a significant difference between the act of disclosure and the act of discovery. It's the equivalent of an unfaithful spouse admitting to an affair, only after having been caught in one. In recent years when the church has appeared to be transparent it was reactionary. The church had been forced to the table. In each instance the problem was discovered by the public, not disclosed by church leaders. The church itself teaches, "We can also intentionally deceive others by silence, or by telling only part of the truth. Whenever we lead people in any way to believe something that is not true, we are not being honest."

*As the Church Historian, I'm aware that none of this is new to you. If any of the above information that I have presented is factually incorrect, please let me know and I will correct it. I have no expectation that this information would change your belief, or testimony, of Joseph Smith, nor do I have any desire to. As stated before, my desire is that you would consider that those of us that have come to a different conclusion than you, are not "lazy learners, lax disciples, foolish or... dishonest", as implied by those in the highest positions of church leadership, and then repeated by members throughout the church. I would hope instead we could be treated with respect, and our position recognized as a valid.

In conclusion, as I previously stated in my introduction, there is a reasonable explanation that can account for the creation of the Book of Mormon and LDS theology, other than the current LDS narrative. That is; Joseph engaged in what LDS historian Teryl Givens calls, "Bricolage", or the art of repurposing objects into a new interpretation. Givens goes on to say, *"the term I would use is 'inspired eclecticist'.* ***And that's a problem for a lot of Latter-day Saints who have read a very different version of history where Mormonism erupted in an absolute vacuum.***"

I believe Joseph was interacting with the world around him, taking the objects, stories, religious discussions of his day, and even his own sexual desires, and repurposing them within a single religious framework. Creating it as he went and changing it whenever he needed. I have studied the apologetic response to each of the things that I have presented. I find them unconvincing. Philosopher William James once wrote, *"When a thing is new, people say: 'It is not true.' Later, when its truth becomes obvious, they say: 'It is not important.' Finally, when its importance cannot be denied, they say: 'Anyway, it is not new.'"*

I am genuinely grateful that you would sacrifice your time to visit with me about church history. If you made it this far, you are probably regretting that decision, but I hope not. You once said *"I'm called the Church historian, but in truth, the real historians are the people I work with. I preside over a department that is full of absolutely brilliant people"*. I believe that Elders Jensen, Snow, and yourself are men of integrity. I also believe that the calling of 'Church Historian' must be the single most difficult calling in the church. You yourself admit that you are not a trained historian; you are a trained lawyer. You have spent your career representing large corporations. Now you have been called to represent a new client, the LDS Church. Where you oversee the church history department and *"the real historians"* on your client's behalf. I have no problem with that. You have been given the daunting task of bridging the gap between the two.

As you speak to members, advise local leaders, listen to historians, and sit in presiding councils, please remember this; In the end I didn't have a "Faith Crisis", I had a trust crisis. I have been taught that faith is the belief in things unseen. But, to disbelieve, what you can in fact see, is not faith, it's fantasy. My experience over the last ten years, with thousands of hours spent researching and studying, both sides of these issues, has been physically exhausting and emotionally difficult. Some would say that I never had a testimony

in the first place. I know that it is impossible to measure a testimony. But here is what I can quantify. I served an honorable full-time mission. I have read the Book of Mormon countless times. I attended the temple faithfully. I was an EFY counselor. I was married in the temple, with Elder Neal A Maxwell officiating. I was a full-time seminary teacher for 14 years. I have served as a counselor in two bishoprics. I pulled a handcart through Martins Cove. I have sat in the office of, and discussed church history with, Lachlan Mackay, who is an Apostle for the Community of Christ, Church Historian, and direct descendent of Joseph Smith. I have participated in an archeological dig at the original Smith family homestead in Nauvoo. I have stood on top of Zelphs mound. I have spent weeks on end, year after year in Nauvoo, studying, listening, and exploring church history. I have stood in Carthage at the place of Joseph Smiths death in reverence, at least a dozen times. I have anointed the sick, and laid hands upon my dying father with President Thomas S. Monson. My entire worldview has been disrupted, and almost every single personal relationship that I have, has been affected. Please believe me when I tell you that I have only arrived at this conclusion, after a lengthy, careful, and heartfelt investigation.

Afterword

Of Faith and Fallacies

At this point we are looking at the same data. The only difference is how we interpret that data. Do we follow the evidence wherever it leads, as Apostle Hugh B Brown wrote? *“The honest investigator must be prepared to follow wherever the search of truth may lead. Truth is often found in the most unexpected places. He must, with fearless and open mind insist that facts are far more important than any cherished, mistaken beliefs, no matter how unpleasant the facts or how delightful the beliefs.”* Or do we, *“start out with an assumption that the Book of Abraham and the Book of Mormon, and anything else that we get from the restored gospel, is true... Therefore, any evidence we find, we will try to fit into that paradigm.”* as Kerry Muhlestein of BYU stated?

It is extremely difficult for the human mind to allow itself to process information that threatens a strongly held belief or paradigm. Information rarely changes a person’s mind, feelings do. Here are two logical fallacies that the mind commonly employs to protect itself from **Cognitive Dissonance**. Which is *“the mental discomfort that results from holding two conflicting beliefs, values, or attitudes.”* Kerry Muhlestein’s statement above is a perfect example of **Confirmation Bias**, it’s *“our tendency to cherry-pick information that confirms our already existing beliefs or ideas.”* It can be fatal to the discovery of truth. It allows us as John F Kennedy said, to *“enjoy the comfort of opinion without the discomfort of thought”*.

But even more common among church members is what is called the **Sunk-Cost Fallacy**. That is *“when a person is reluctant to abandon a course of action because they have invested heavily in it.”* Most members have spent their entire lives dedicated to the church. Their entire identity comes from being LDS. To even consider the possibility that the church is not true creates too much cognitive dissonance. Their values, their self-worth, their families, and their entire social network is welded to the church. How many hours, days, months, years, or money was spent in church service, all at the expense of time with family, friends, or experiences that you can never get back. If the church isn’t true, then who am I? What was it all for? What’s the purpose of life? Only when a lived experience contradicts a learned paradigm, will a person even consider a new reality. And when that happens, its usually an extremely painful process.

Having a spiritual experience is beautiful and can be life changing. Psychologists often refer to this as **Elevation**, *“an emotion elicited by witnessing actual or imagined virtuous acts*

of remarkable moral goodness. It is experienced as a distinct feeling of warmth and expansion." But, if the only argument that you have left in the face of empirical evidence is that "I have had spiritual experiences that I cannot deny". Then, you're using the spirit as a declaration of immunity from the power of reason. It's the reason not to give reasons, for what you believe. It's being used to stop thoughts. Most importantly your own. Spiritual experiences exist among all people, in all religions on this earth. But they only seem to be valid, when it's our spiritual experience, and our religion is the one being discussed.

Appendix

Number of documented historical accounts confirming the public discussion surrounding the Gold Plates:

1. Peter Ingersol
2. William Stafford
3. Willard Chase
4. Parley Chase
5. Henry Harris
6. Abigail Harris
7. Lucy Harris
8. Roswell Nichols
9. Joseph Capron
10. Isaac Hale
11. Nathaniel C. Lewis
12. Hiel and Joseph Joseph Lewis
13. John Clark
14. Martin Harris
15. Isaac Butts
16. Lorenzo Saunders
17. Sarah Anderick
18. Pomeroy Tucker
19. The Palymra Freeman
20. Letter from Amherst
21. The Ohio Star
22. William Smith
23. Lucy Mack Smith
24. Joseph Knight Sr.
25. Joseph Smith Sr.
26. Katherine Smith Salisbury

Number of documented historical accounts confirming the public discussion surrounding the First Vision:

- Zero

THAT ARE GIVEN
THROUGH YOU - T.C.

IN THIS THE BEGINNING
OF THE RISING UP AND
THE COMING FORTH OF
MY CHURCH OUT OF THE
WILDERNESS - CLEAR
AS THE MOON, AND
FAIR AS THE SUN, AND
TERRIBLE AS AN
ARMY WITH BANNERS.
W.A.

WHOM I SHALL CALL AND
ORDAIN, UNTO WHOM I WILL
SHOW THESE THINGS, AND
THEY - W.A.

10.44 of mine of my servants shall go forth with my
word ~~in this generation~~; yea, ~~these~~ shall know of
a surety that these things are true, for I will give
them power, that they may behold and view these
things as they are, and to none else will I grant this
power, to receive this same testimony among this
generation. And the testimony of three witnesses
will I send forth ~~and~~ my word, and behold, whoso-
ever believeth ~~in~~ my ~~word~~, them will I visit with the
manifestation of my spirit, and they shall be born
of me, and their testimony shall also go forth.

THEY - T.C.

FROM HEAVEN WILL
I DECLARE IT
UNTO THEM.
W.A.

OF - T.C.

WORDS - T.C.

ON - T.C.

EVEN OF WATER AND
OF THE SPIRIT - AND
YOU MUST WAIT YET
A LITTLE WHILE,
FOR YE ARE NOT
YET ORDAINED -
W.A.

B

5 And thus, ~~the people of this generation have~~
~~not their hearts, I will work a reformation among~~
~~them, and I will put down all lying, and deceiv-~~
~~ings, and priestcrafts, and enying, and strifes, and~~
~~injuries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniqui-~~
~~ties, and I will establish my church, like unto the~~
~~church which was taught by my disciples in the~~
~~days of old.~~

UNTO THE CONDEMNATION
OF THIS GENERATION IF
THEY HARDEN THEIR
HEARTS AGAINST THEM;
FOR A DESOLATING
SCOURGE SHALL GO
FORTH AMONG THE
INHABITANTS OF THE
EARTH, AND SHALL
CONTINUE TO BE POURED
OUT FROM TIME TO
TIME, IF THEY REPENT
NOT, UNTIL THE
EARTH IS EMPTY, AND
THE INHABITANTS
THEREOF ARE CON-
SUMED AWAY AND
UTTERLY DESTROYED
BY THE BRIGHTNESS
OF MY COMING.
W.A.

W.D.

C

6 And now if this generation do harden their
hearts against my word, behold I will deliver them:
yet I will not, for he repenteth and hath much pain
in this time, for he hath not yet had time to
repent of the people of this generation: and yet I
will deliver them from the iniquities of Babylon and Gomorrah, for
they come at this time: and behold I will send
justice hasting over their heads, and I will pour
out the indignation of their hearts, the time can I not
yet ~~fall~~ upon them. Behold I tell you these
things even as I also told the people of the destruc-
tion of Jerusalem, and my word shall be verified at
this time as it hath hitherto been verified.

YOU - W.A.

7 And now I command my servant Joseph to re-
pent, and walk more uprightly before me, and yield
to the persuasions of men no more; and that ~~he~~

TO - W.A.

YOU - T.C.

D

18

CHAPTER VI.

1 A Revelation given to Joseph and Oliver, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, April, 1829, when they desired to know whether John, the beloved disciple, tarried on earth. Translated from parchment, written and hid up by himself.

FOR IF YOU SHALL
ASK WHAT YOU WILL,
IT SHALL BE
GRANTED UNTO YOU
W.A.

OVER DEATH-W.A.

UNTIL-T.C.

DESIRED-T.C.

DESIRED-T.C.

THAT HE MIGHT
DO MORE, OR-W.A.

2 AND the Lord said unto me, John my beloved, what desirest thou? and I said, Lord, give unto me power, that I may bring souls unto thee.

UNTO HIM-W.A.

LIVE AND-W.A.

And the Lord said unto me: Verily, verily I say unto thee, because thou desiredst this, thou shalt tarry ~~on~~ I come in my glory:—

AND SHALT PROPHECY
BEFORE NATIONS,
KINDREDS, TONGUES
AND PEOPLE-W.A.

3 And for this cause, the Lord said unto Peter:— If I will that he tarry till I come, what is that to thee? for he ~~desiredst~~ of me that he might bring souls unto me: but thou desiredst that thou ~~might~~ speedily come unto me in my kingdom: I say unto thee, Peter, this was a good desire, but my beloved has ~~undertaken~~ a greater work.

MIGHTEST-T.C.

4 Verily I say unto you, ye shall both have according to your desires, for ye both joy in that which ye have desired.

YET AMONG MEN THAN WHAT HE HAS BEFORE DONE.
YEA, HE HAS UNDERTAKEN A GREATER WORK;
THEREFORE I WILL MAKE HIM AS FLAMING FIRE
AND A MINISTERING ANGEL; HE SHALL MINISTER
FOR THOSE WHO SHALL BE HEIRS OF SALVATION
WHO DWELL ON THE EARTH.

AND I WILL MAKE THEE TO MINISTER FOR
HIM AND FOR THY BROTHER JAMES; AND UNTO
YOU THREE I WILL GIVE THIS POWER AND THE
KEYS OF THIS MINISTRY UNTIL I COME. -W.A.

E

CHAPTER VII.

1 *A Revelation given to Oliver, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, April, 1829.*

COWDERY-W.A.

O ~~LIVE~~ verily, verily I say unto you, that assuredly as the Lord liveth, ~~who~~ ^{WHO} is your God and your redeemer, even so ~~sure~~ ^{SURELY} shall you receive a knowledge of whatsoever things you shall ask in faith, with an honest heart, believing that you shall receive a knowledge concerning the engravings of old records, which are ancient, which contain those parts of my scripture of which ~~has~~ ^{HAS} been spoken, by the manifestation of my Spirit; yea, behold I will tell you in your mind and in your heart by the Holy Ghost, which shall come upon you and which shall dwell in your heart.

WHO-T.C.

SURELY-T.C.

HAS-T.C.

2 Now, behold this is the Spirit of revelation: behold this is the Spirit by which Moses brought the children of Israel through the Red sea on dry ground: therefore, this is thy gift; apply unto it and blessed art thou, for it shall deliver you out of the hands of your enemies, when, if it were not so, they would slay you and bring your soul to destruction.

THY GIFT-W.A.

3 O remember, these words and keep my commandments. Remember this is your gift. Now

F **ARRON**-T.C.

this is not all, for you have another gift, which is the gift of ~~working with the rod~~; behold it has told you things: behold there is no other power save God, that can cause this ~~rod~~ ^{rod} ~~to move~~, ~~to work in your hands~~, for it is the ~~work~~ ^{work} of God; and therefore whatsoever you shall ask me to tell you by that means, that will I grant unto you, ~~that~~ you shall ~~know~~.

MANY-W.A.

GIFT OF AARON TO BE WITH YOU-W.A.

THEREFORE, DOUBT NOT, -W.A.

HAVE KNOWLEDGE CONCERNING IT. T.C.

THE POWER OF W.A.

W.D. **F**

AND YOU SHALL HOLD IT IN YOUR HANDS, AND DO MARVELOUS WORKS; AND NO POWER SHALL BE ABLE TO TAKE IT AWAY OUT OF YOUR HANDS, FOR IT IS THE WORK OF GOD. - W.A.

4 Remember that without faith you can do nothing.

GIFT-T.C.

AND-T.C.

OR-T.C. ~~Neither by~~ the ministering of angels, and the Lord God ~~has~~ spoken it; and honor, power, and glory, be rendered to his holy name both now and ever. Amen.

HAS-T.C. 29 And again, by way of commandment to the church, concerning the manner of baptism;

ALL THOSE WHO HUMBLE THEMSELVES T.C. 30 ~~Behold~~ ~~whoever~~ ~~humbleth~~ ~~himself~~ before God and ~~desireth~~ to be baptized, and ~~comes forth~~ with ~~broken heart~~ and ~~a~~ contrite ~~spirit~~ and ~~ex-~~ ~~presseth~~ ~~unto~~ the church, that they have truly re-
DESIRED-T.C. ~~pent~~ of all their sins and are willing to take upon
W.D. ~~them~~ the name of Christ, having a determination to
WITNESS BEFORE-T.C. ~~serve him~~ ~~unto~~ the end, and truly manifest by their
JESUS-W.A. ~~works~~ that they have received the Spirit of Christ
TO-T.C. ~~unto~~ the remission of their sins, ~~then~~ shall they be
HIS-T.C. ~~received~~ ~~unto~~ baptism into ~~the~~ church of Christ.
BY-T.C. 31 The duty of the elders, priests, teachers, deacons and members of the church of Christ.

BREAD AND WINE - W.A. 32 An apostle is an elder, and it is his calling to baptize and to ordain other elders, priests, teachers and deacons, and to administer the flesh and blood of Christ ~~according to the scriptures~~;
AND TO CONFIRM THOSE WHO ARE BAPTIZED INTO THE CHURCH, BY THE LAYING ON OF HANDS FOR THE BAPTISM OF FIRE AND THE HOLY GHOST, ACCORDING TO THE SCRIPTURES; W.A. 33 And to teach, expound, exhort, baptize, and watch over the church;
EMBLEMS OF THE W.A. 34 And to confirm the church by the laying on of the hands, and the giving of the Holy Ghost, and to take the lead of all meetings.
W.D. 35 The elders are to conduct the meetings as they are led by the Holy Ghost.
W.D. 36 The priest's duty is to preach, teach, expound, exhort and baptize, and administer the sacrament, and visit the house of each member, and exhort them to pray vocally and in secret, and ~~also to~~ attend to all family duties;
W.D. 37 And ordain other priests, teachers and deacons,
HE MAY ALSO W.A.

COME-T.C. SPIRITS-T.C. W.D. HEARTS-T.C. OF-W.A. W.D. W.D. W.D.

ACCORDING TO THE COMMANDMENTS AND REVELATIONS OF GOD. -W.A.

HE IS TO - W.A.

and take the lead of meetings; but none of these offices is he to do when there is an elder present, but in all cases is to assist the elder.

W.D.

38 The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with them, and strengthen them, and see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying or backbiting, nor evil speaking;

39 And see that the church meet together often, and also see that all the members do their duty;

40 And he is to take the lead of meetings in the absence of the elder or priest, and is to be assisted always, and in all his duties in the church by the deacons;

W.D.

IF OCCASION REQUIRES
W.A.

OR LAY ON HANDS;
THEY ARE, HOWEVER,
T.C.

41 But neither the teachers nor deacons have authority to baptize or administer the sacrament, or to warn, expound, exhort and teach, and invite all to come unto Christ.

42 Every elder, priest, teacher or deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him, by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.

AND HE IS TO BE
ORDAINED - W.A.

AND SAID CONFERENCES
ARE - W.A.

43 The several elders composing this church of Christ, are to meet in conference once in three months, or from time to time as they shall direct or appoint, to do church business whatever is necessary.

WHATEVER - W.A.

44 And each priest or teacher, who is ordained by a priest, is to take a certificate from him at the time, which when presented to an elder, he is to give him a license, which shall authorize him to perform the duty of his calling.

W.D.

MAY - T.C.

CERTIFICATE - W.A.

TO - W.A.

DUTIES - T.C.

45 The duty of the members after they are received by baptism.

W.D.

46 The elders or priests are to have a sufficient

WHEN THERE IS NO ELDER PRESENT;
BUT WHEN THERE IS AN ELDER
PRESENT, HE IS ONLY TO PREACH,
TEACH, EXPOUND, EXHORT, AND
BAPTIZE, AND VISIT THE HOUSE
OF EACH MEMBER,
EXHORTING THEM TO
PRAY VOCALLY AND IN
SECRET AND ATTEND
TO ALL FAMILY DUTIES.
IN ALL THESE DUTIES
THE PRIEST - T.C.

IF OCCASION
REQUIRES - W.A.

W.D.

SAID CONFERENCES
T.C.

W.D.

TO BE DONE AT THE
TIME. THE ELDERS ARE
TO RECEIVE THEIR
LICENSES FROM OTHER
ELDERS, BY VOTE OF
THE CHURCH TO WHICH
THEY BELONG, OR
FROM THE CONFERENCES
W.A.

OR DEACON - W.A.

SHALL ENTITLE
T.C.

OR HE MAY RECEIVE IT FROM A CONFERENCE. NO PERSON IS TO BE ORDAINED TO ANY OFFICE IN THIS CHURCH, WHERE THERE IS A REGULARLY ORGANIZED BRANCH OF THE SAME, WITHOUT THE VOTE OF THAT CHURCH; BUT THE PRESIDING ELDERS, TRAVELING BISHOPS, HIGH COUNCILORS, HIGH PRIESTS, AND ELDERS, MAY HAVE THE PRIVILEGE OF ORDAINING, WHERE THERE IS NO BRANCH OF THE CHURCH THAT A VOTE MAY BE CALLED. EVERY PRESIDENT OF THE HIGH PRIESTHOOD (OR PRESIDING ELDER), BISHOP, HIGH COUNCILOR, AND HIGH PRIEST, IS TO BE ORDAINED BY THE DIRECTION OF A HIGH COUNCIL OR GENERAL CONFERENCE.

W.A.

K

60

CHAPTER XXVIII.

AND TAKE UPON YOU MY WHOLE ARMOR, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO WITHSTAND THE EVIL DAY, HAVING DONE ALL, THAT YE MAY BE ABLE TO STAND. STAND, THEREFORE, HAVING YOUR LOINS GIRT ABOUT WITH TRUTH, HAVING ON THE BREAST-PLATE OF RIGHTEOUSNESS, AND YOUR FEET SHOD WITH THE PREPARATION OF THE GOSPEL OF PEACE, WHICH I HAVE SENT MINE ANGELS TO COMMIT UNTO YOU; TAKING THE SHIELD OF FAITH WHEREWITH YE SHALL BE ABLE TO QUENCH ALL THE FIERY DARTS OF THE WICKED; AND TAKE THE HELMET OF SALVATION, AND THE SWORD OF MY SPIRIT, WHICH I WILL POUR OUT UPON YOU, AND MY WORD WHICH I REVEAL UNTO YOU, AND BE AGREED AS TOUCHING ALL THINGS WHATSOEVER YE ASK OF ME, - W.A.

1 *A Commandment to the church of Christ, given in Harmony, Pennsylvania, September 4, 1830.*

LISTEN to the voice of Jesus Christ, your Lord, your God and your Redeemer, whose word is quick and powerful.

2 For behold I say unto you, that it mattereth not what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink, when ye partake of the sacrament, if it so be that ye do it with an eye single to my glory;

3 Remembering unto the Father my body which was laid down for you, and my blood which was shed for the remission of your sins:

4 Wherefore a commandment I give unto you, that you shall not purchase wine, neither strong drink of your enemies:

5 Wherefore you shall partake of none, except it is made new among you, yea, in this my Father's kingdom which shall be built up on the earth.

6 Behold this is wisdom in me, wherefore marvel not, for the hour cometh that I will drink of the fruit of the vine with you, on the earth, and with all those whom my Father hath given me out of the world:

7 Wherefore lift up your hearts and rejoice, and gird up your loins and be faithful until I come:

~~Even so.~~ Amen.

W.D.

AND YE SHALL BE CAUGHT UP THAT WHERE I AM YE SHALL BE ALSO. - W.A.

MORONI, WHOM I HAVE SENT UNTO YOU TO REVEAL THE BOOK OF MOR-MON, CONTAINING THE FULNESS OF MY EVER-LASTING GOSPEL, TO WHOM I HAVE COMMITTED THE KEYS OF THE RECORD OF THE STICK OF EPHRAIM; AND ALSO WITH ELIAS, TO WHOM I HAVE COMMITTED THE KEYS OF BRINGING TO PASS THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS SPOKEN BY THE MOUTH OF ALL THE HOLY PROPHETS SINCE THE WORLD BEGAN, CONCERNING THE LAST DAYS; AND ALSO JOHN THE SON OF ZACHARIAS, WHICH ZACHARIAS HE (ELIAS) VISITED AND GAVE PROMISE THAT HE SHOULD HAVE A SON, AND HIS NAME SHOULD BE JOHN, AND HE SHOULD BE FILLED WITH THE SPIRIT OF ELIAS; WHICH JOHN I HAVE

SENT UNTO YOU, MY SERVANTS, JOSEPH SMITH, JUN., AND OLIVER COWDERY, TO ORDAIN YOU UNTO THE FIRST PRIESTHOOD WHICH YOU HAVE RECEIVED, THAT YOU MIGHT BE CALLED AND ORDAINED EVEN AS AARON; AND ALSO ELIJAH UNTO WHOM I HAVE COMMITTED THE KEYS OF THE POWER OF TURNING THE HEARTS OF THE FATHERS TO THE CHILDREN, AND THE HEARTS OF THE CHILDREN TO THE FATHERS, THAT THE WHOLE EARTH MAY NOT BE SMITTEN WITH A CURSE; AND ALSO WITH JOSEPH AND JACOB, AND ISAAC, AND ABRAHAM, YOUR FATHERS, BY WHOM THE PROMISES REMAIN; AND ALSO WITH MICHAEL, OR ADAM, THE FATHER OF ALL, THE PRINCE OF ALL, THE ANCIENT OF DAYS; AND ALSO WITH PETER, AND JAMES, AND JOHN, WHOM I HAVE SENT UNTO YOU, BY WHOM I HAVE ORDAINED YOU AND CONFIRMED YOU TO BE APOSTLES, AND ESPECIAL WITNESSES OF MY NAME, AND BEAR THE KEYS OF YOUR MINISTRY AND OF THE SAME THINGS WHICH I REVEALED UNTO THEM; UNTO WHOM I HAVE COMMITTED THE KEYS OF MY KINGDOM, AND A DISPENSATION OF THE GOSPEL FOR THE LAST TIMES; AND FOR THE FULNESS OF TIMES, IN THE WHICH I WILL GATHER TOGETHER IN ONE ALL THINGS, BOTH WHICH ARE IN HEAVEN, AND WHICH ARE ON EARTH; AND ALSO WITH - W.A.

BUT-T.C.
 REPENTS-T.C.
 23. whosoever committeth adultery and repenteth not, shall be cast out; and he that committeth adultery and repenteth with all his heart, and forsaketh, and doeth it no more, thou shalt forgive him; but if he doeth it again, he shall not be forgiven, but shall be cast out.

24. Thou shalt not speak evil of thy neighbor, nor do him any harm.

25. Thou knowest my laws, they are given in my scriptures, he that sinneth and repenteth not, shall be cast out.

26. If thou lovest me, thou shalt serve me and keep all my commandments; and behold, thou shalt consecrate ~~all~~ thy properties, that which thou hast committed to me, with a covenant and a deed which can not be broken; and they shall be laid before the bishop of my church, and two of the elders, such as he shall appoint, and set apart for that purpose.

27. And it shall come to pass, that the bishop of my church, after that he has received the properties of my church, that he can not be taken from the church, he shall appoint every man a steward over his own property, or that which he has received, inasmuch as is sufficient for himself and family:

28. And the residue shall be kept to administer to him who has not, that every man may receive according as he stands in need:

29. And the residue shall be kept in my storehouse, to administer to the poor and needy, as shall be appointed by the elders of the church and the bishop; and for the purpose of purchasing lands, and the building up of the New Jerusalem, which is hereafter to be revealed; that my covenant people may be gathered in one, in the day that I shall come to my temple:

HAS COMMITTED T.C.
 IT-W.A.
 W.D.
 NOR-T.C.
 CONCERNING THESE THINGS-W.A.
 WILT-T.C.
 REMEMBER THE POOR AND-W.A.
 TO IMPART-W.A.
 OR HIGH PRIETS-W.A.
 HIS COUNSELORS, W.A.
 AFTER THEY ARE LAID BEFORE-W.A.
 THESE TESTIMONIES CONCERNING THE CONSECRATION OF-W.A.
 THEY-T.C.
 SHALL BE MADE ACCOUNTABLE UNTO ME-W.A.
 W.D.
 BY CONSECRATION-W.A.
 AGREEABLE TO MY COMMANDMENTS-T.C.
 BE AMPLY SUPPLIED AND-W.A.
 WHO HAS NEED-W.A.
 FROM TIME TO TIME-W.A.
 THE-W.A.
 W.D.
 FOR THE PUBLIC BENEFIT OF THE CHURCH AND BUILDING HOUSES OF WORSHIP-W.A.
 WHEN-T.C.
 THAT-T.C.

FOR THEIR SUPPORT-W.A.
 OF-T.C.
 THEM-T.C.
 AND INASMUCH AS YE IMPART OF YOUR SUBSTANCE UNTO THE POOR, YE WILL DO IT UNTO ME W.A.
 OR HAS APPOINTED-W.A.
 AND-W.A.
 AGAIN, IF THERE SHALL BE PROPERTIES IN THE HANDS OF THE CHURCH, OR ANY INDIVIDUALS OF IT, MORE THAN IS NECESSARY FOR THEIR SUPPORT AFTER THIS FIRST CONSECRATION, WHICH IS A RESIDUE TO BE CONSECRATED UNTO THE BISHOP, IT-W.A.
 THOSE-T.C.
 W.D.
 HAVE-T.C.
 THEREFORE-T.C.
 AND HIS COUNCIL-W.A.
 TO HIS WANTS-T.C.
 HIGH COUNCIL T.C.

you in my own due time where the New Jerusalem shall be built.

48 And behold, it shall come to pass, that my servants shall be sent ~~both~~ to the east, and to the west, to the north, and to the south; and even now let him that goeth to the east, teach them that shall be converted to flee to the west; and this in consequence of that which is ~~to come~~ on the earth, and of secret combinations.

49 Behold, thou shalt observe all these things, and great shall be thy reward.

50 ~~Thou shalt observe to keep the mysteries of the kingdom unto thyself, for it is not given to the world to know the mysteries.~~

51 The laws which ye have received, and shall hereafter receive, shall be sufficient ~~for you both~~ here, and in the New Jerusalem.

52 Therefore, he that lacketh ~~knowledge~~, let him ask of me and I will give him liberally and upbraid him not.

53 Lift up your hearts and rejoice, for unto you the kingdom ~~has~~ been given; even so: Amen.

54 The priests and teachers, shall have their ~~stewards~~ ~~and~~ ~~be~~ ~~even~~ ~~as~~ ~~the~~ ~~members~~; and the elders ~~are~~ ~~to~~ assist the bishop in all things, ~~and~~ ~~be~~ ~~as~~ ~~we~~ ~~see~~ ~~that~~ their families ~~be~~ supported out of the property which is consecrated to the ~~Lord~~, either a stewardship, or otherwise, as may be thought best by the ~~elders~~ and bishop.

55 ~~Thou shalt contract no debts with the world, except thou art commanded.~~

56 And again, the elders and bishop, shall counsel together, and they shall do ~~by the direction of the Spirit as it must needs be necessary.~~

57 There shall be as many appointed as must

FOR UNTO YOU IT IS GIVEN TO KNOW-T.C.

COMING-T.C.

BUT UNTO THE WORLD IT IS NOT GIVEN TO KNOW THEM-T.C.

AND BE FAITHFUL-W.A.

YE-W.A.

TO-T.C.

ESTABLISH-W.A.

WISDOM-T.C.

HAVE-T.C.

W.D.

AS COUNSELERS P W.A.

ARE TO HAVE-T.C.

W.D.

BISHOP-T.C.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE POOR, AND FOR OTHER PURPOSES, AS BEFORE MENTIONED; OR THEY ARE TO RECEIVE A JUST REMUNERATION FOR ALL THEIR SERVICES, -W.A.

YE SHALL OBSERVE W.A.

CHURCH COVENANTS, SUCH AS-W.A.

OR IN OTHER WORDS, THE KEYS OF THE CHURCH-W.A.

STEWARDSHIPS-T.C.

OR HIGH PRIESTS WHO-W.A.

APPOINTED-W.A.

COUNSELORS-T.C.

OR DECIDED-W.A.

W.D.

AND THE BISHOP, ALSO, SHALL RECEIVE HIS SUPPORT, OR A JUST REMUNERATION FOR ALL HIS SERVICES IN THE CHURCH. -W.A.

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR.

Vol. 1.

Independence, Mo. March, 1833.

No. 10.

ARE-T.C.
AND AGAIN-W.A.
OF THE PRESIDENCY
OF THE SCHOOL-W.A.
PRESIDENT-W.A.
THEREFORE, HE SHALL
BE FIRST-W.A.
CAREFULLY-T.C.

REVELATION GIVEN KIRTLAND, OHIO, JANUARY 3, 1833.

THE order of the house prepared for the presidency (and) instruction in all things, that is expedient for the officers, or in other words (those) who are called to the ministry in the church, beginning at the highpriests even down to the deacons.

And this shall be the order of the house: V
He that is appointed to be a teacher shall be found standing in his place, which shall be prepared for him in the house of God; in a place that the congregation in the house may hear his words (correctly) and distinctly, not with loud speech. And when he cometh into the house of God, for he should be first in the house:
Behold this is beautiful, that he may be an example, let him offer himself in prayer upon his knees before God, in token of the everlasting covenant. And when any shall come in after him, let the teacher arise and with uplifted hands to heaven:
Yea even directly (and) salute his brother, or brethren with these words, (say- ing):
Art thou a brother or brethren, I salute you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, in token of the everlasting covenant; in which covenant I receive you to fellowship in a determination that is fixed, immovable and unchangeable to be your friend and brother through the grace of God, in the bonds of love, to walk in all the commandments of God himself, in thanksgiving forever and ever. V And he that cometh in, and is a brother or brethren, shall salute the teacher with uplifted hands to heaven, with this same prayer and covenant, or by saying amen, in token of the same.
Behold, verily I say unto you, this is (a sample) unto you for a salutation to one another in the house of God. V
(And to you the called to the ministry of the ordinances of the house of God; and ye are called to do this by prayer and thanksgiving, as the Spirit shall give utterance, in all your doings in the house of the Lord, that it may become a sanctuary, a tabernacle of the Holy Spirit, to your edification: Amen.

OF THE SCHOOL OF THE
PROPHETS, ESTABLISHED
FOR THEIR-W.A.
W.D.
THOSE-T.C.
OF THE CHURCH-W.A.
THEM, EVEN FOR ALL-W.A.
IN THE HOUSE-W.A.
OR-T.C.
OR REMEMBRANCE
W.A.
W.D.
W.D.
OR REMEMBRANCE
W.A.
AMEN-W.A.
PRESIDENT OR-W.A.
THEY-W.A.
IF THEY BE-W.A.
AN ENSAMPLE-T.C.
W.D.
IN THE SCHOOL OF
THE PROPHETS-W.A.

AND YE SHALL NOT RECEIVE ANY AMONG YOU INTO THIS SCHOOL SAVE HE IS CLEAN FROM THE BLOOD OF THIS GENERATION; AND HE SHALL BE RECEIVED BY THE ORDINANCE OF THE WASHING OF FEET, FOR UNTO THIS END WAS THE ORDINANCE OF THE WASHING OF FEET INSTITUTED. AND AGAIN, THE ORDINANCE OF WASHING FEET IS TO BE ADMINISTERED BY THE PRESIDENT, OR PRESIDING ELDER OF THE CHURCH. IT IS TO BE COMMENCED WITH PRAYER; AND AFTER PARTAKING OF BREAD AND WINE, HE IS TO GIRD HIMSELF ACCORDING TO THE PATTERN GIVEN IN THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER OF JOHN'S TESTIMONY CONCERNING ME.
W.A.

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR.

Vol. I.

Independence, Mo. October, 1832.

No. 5.

A REVELATION, GIVEN NOVEMBER, 1831.

HYDE-W.A.
ORDINATION-T.C. MY servant, Orson, was called, by his ordinance, to proclaim the everlasting gospel, by the spirit of the living God, from people to people, and from land to land, in the congregations of the wicked, in their synagogues, reasoning with and expounding all scriptures unto them: And behold and lo, this is an example unto all those who were ordained unto this priesthood, whose mission is appointed unto them to go forth: And this is the example unto them, that they shall speak as they are moved upon by the Holy Ghost; and whatsoever they shall speak, when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, shall be scripture; shall be the will of the Lord; shall be the mind of the Lord; shall be the word of the Lord; shall be the voice of the Lord, and the power of God unto salvation: Behold this is the promise of the Lord unto you, O ye my servants: wherefore, be of good cheer, and do not fear, for I the Lord am with you, and will stand by you; and ye shall bear record of me as Jesus Christ, that I am the Son of the living God; that I was; that I am; and that I am to come. This is the word of the Lord unto you my servant, Orson, and also unto my servant, Luke, and unto my servant, Lyman, and unto my servant Willard unto all the faithful elders of my church: Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature; acting in the authority which I have given you, in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost; and he that believeth, and is baptized, shall be saved, and he that believeth not shall be damned; and he that believeth shall be blessed with signs following, even as it is written: And unto you it shall be given to know the signs of the times, and the signs of the coming of the Son of man; and of as many as the Father shall be so, to you, shall be given power to seal them up unto eternal life: Amen.

JOHNSON-W.A.
JOHNSON-W.A.
HYDE-W.A.
E. M'LELLIN-W.A.
COVENANTS-T.C. And now, concerning the items in addition to the laws and commandments, that are these: That from henceforth in the due time of the Lord, other bishops to be set apart unto the church, to minister even according to the first; wherefore, shall be high priests who are worthy; and shall be appointed by conference of high priests. And again, no bishop or judge, which shall be set apart for the ministry, shall be tried or condemned for any crime, save it be before a conference of high priests; and in as much as he is found guilty before a conference of high priests, by testimony that cannot be impeached, he shall be condemned according to the law of the church. And again, in as much as parents have children in Zion that teach them not to understand the doctrine of repentance; faith in Christ the Son of the living God; and of baptism and the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of the hands, when eight years old: the sin be upon the heads of the parents, for this shall be a law unto the inhabitants of Zion, and their children shall be baptized for the remission of their sins when eight years old, and receive the laying on of the hands: and the fathers shall teach their children to pray, and to walk uprightly before the Lord. And the inhabitants of Zion shall also observe the Sabbath day to keep it holy. And the inhabitants of Zion, also, shall remember their fathers, in as much as they are appointed to labor, in all faithfulness, for the father shall be had in remembrance before the Lord. Now I the Lord am not well pleased with the inhabitants of Zion, for there are idols among them; and their children are also growing up in wickedness: They also seek not earnestly the riches of mercy, but their eyes are full of greediness. These things ought not to be, and must be done away from among them: wherefore let my servant Oliver carry these sayings unto the land of Zion. And a commandment I give unto them, that he that observeth not his prayers before the Lord in the season thereof, let him be had in remembrance before the judge of my people. These sayings are true and faithful: wherefore transgress them not, neither take therefrom. Behold I am Alpha and Omega, and I come quickly: Amen.

THEY-T.C.
REMAIN-T.C.
ARE-T.C.
PRIESTS-T.C.
W.D.
THEY-T.C.
THE PRESIDENCY OF THE CHURCH-T.C.
THIS PRESIDENCY-T.C.
COVENANTS AND COMMANDMENTS-T.C.
OR IN ANY OF HER STAKES WHICH ARE ORGANIZED-W.A.
HIGH PRIEST WHO T.C.
AND IF HE REPENT HE SHALL BE-T.C.
SHALL ALSO-T.C.
OR IN ANY OF HER STAKES WHICH ARE ORGANIZED-W.A.
HEADS-T.C.
COWDERY-W.A.

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD, EXCEPT THEY BE LITERAL DESCENDANTS OF AARON. AND IF THEY BE LITERAL DESCENDANTS OF AARON THEY HAVE A LEGAL RIGHT TO THE BISHOPRIC, IF THEY ARE THE FIRSTBORN AMONG THE SONS OF AARON; FOR THE FIRSTBORN HOLDS THE RIGHT OF THE PRESIDENCY OVER THIS PRIESTHOOD, AND THE KEYS OR AUTHORITY OF THE SAME. NO MAN HAS A LEGAL RIGHT TO THIS OFFICE, TO HOLD THE KEYS OF THIS PRIESTHOOD, EXCEPT HE BE A LITERAL DESCENDANT AND THE FIRSTBORN OF AARON. BUT, AS A HIGH PRIEST OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD HAS AUTHORITY TO OFFICIATE IN ALL THE LESSER OFFICES HE MAY OFFICIATE IN THE OFFICE OF BISHOP WHEN NO LITERAL DESCENDANT OF AARON CAN BE FOUND, PROVIDED HE IS CALLED AND SET APART AND ORDAINED UNTO THIS POWER, UNDER THE HANDS OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY OF THE MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD. AND A LITERAL DESCENDANT OF AARON, ALSO, MUST BE DESIGNATED BY THIS PRESIDENCY, AND FOUND WORTHY, AND ANOINTED, AND ORDAINED UNDER THE HANDS OF THIS PRESIDENCY, OTHERWISE THEY ARE NOT LEGALLY AUTHORIZED TO OFFICIATE IN THEIR PRIESTHOOD.

BUT, BY VIRTUE OF THE DECREE CONCERNING THEIR RIGHT OF THE PRIESTHOOD DESCENDING FROM FATHER TO SON, THEY MAY CLAIM THEIR ANOINTING IF AT ANY TIME THEY CAN PROVE THEIR LINEAGE, OR DO ASCERTAIN IT BY REVELATION FROM THE LORD UNDER THE HANDS OF THE ABOVE NAMED PRESIDENCY. -T.C.

TIMES AND SEASONS.

"TRUTH WILL PREVAIL."

Vol. 1, No. 7.] SAUVOO, ILLINOIS, MAY, 1840. [Whole No. 7.

SEASONS.

99

COPY OF A LETTER, WRITTEN BY J.
SMITH JR. AND OTHERS, WHILE IN PRISON.
Liberty Jail, Clay Co. Mo.

To Bishop Partridge, and to the
Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day
Saints, in Quincy Illinois, and to those
scattered abroad, throughout all the re-
gions round about.

Your humble servant Joseph Smith
is prisoner for Christ's sake, and the
saints, taken and held by the power of
mobocracy under the exterminating
reign of his excellency Governor Lil-
burn W. Boggs, in company with his
fellow prisoners and beloved brethren,
Caleb Baldwin, Lyman Wight, Hyrum
Smith, and Alexander McRae, send
unto you greeting: May the grace of
God the Father, and the Lord and
Saviour Jesus Christ, rest upon you
all, and abide with you for ever; and
may faith, virtue, knowledge, temper-
ance, patience, godliness, brotherly-
kindness and charity dwell in you
and abound, so that you may not be
blamed or unfruitful.

We know, that the greater part of
you are acquainted with the wrongs,
high toned injustice and cruelty which
is practised upon us; we have been
taken prisoners, charged falsely with
all kind of crimes and thrown into
a prison enclosed with strong walls,
and are surrounded with a strong guard
who are as indefatigable in watching
us, as their master is in laying snares
for the people of God. Therefore un-
der these circumstances, dearly beloved
brethren, we are the more ready to
claim your fellowship and love. Our
situation is calculated to awaken our
minds to a stored remembrance of
your affection, and kindness; and we
think that your situation will have the
same effect; therefore, we believe, that
nothing can separate us from the love
of God, and our fellowship one with an-
other; and that every species of wicked-
ness and cruelty practised upon us, will
only tend to bind our hearts and seal
them together in love.

It is probably, as unnecessary for us
to say, that we are thus treated and
held in bonds, without cause as it would
be for you to say, that you were im-
prisoned and driven from your homes without
any provocation; we mutually under-
stand and verily know, that if the citi-
zens of the State of Missouri, had not

W.D.

100

TIMES A

abused the saints, and had been as de-
voted of peace as we were, there would
have been nothing but peace and quiet-
ude to this day and we should not have
been in this wretched place but bur-
thened with the society of demons in
human form and compelled to hear
nothing but oaths and curses, and vir-
tues scenes of drunkenness and de-
baucheries of every description; nei-
ther would the cries of orphans and
widows have ascended to God or the
blood of the saints have stained the
earth, and cried for vengeance against
them. But "we dwell with those who
hated peace" and who delighted in war
and surely their unrelenting hearts,
their inhuman and murderous disposi-
tion—and their cruel practices, shock
humanity, and defy description! It is
truly a tale of sorrow, lamentation and
we, too much for humanity to compre-
hend. Such a transaction cannot be
found where kings and tyrants reign,
or among the savages of the wilder-
ness, or even among the ferocious
beasts of the forest. To think that
man should be martyred for aught, after
being cruelly put to death. Women
have their last morsel stolen from them,
while their helpless children were cling-
ing around them and crying for food—
and then, to gratify the selfish desires
of their more than inhuman oppressors,
we violated, is hard in the extreme.

They practice these things upon the
saints who have done them no wrong,
had committed no crime, and who were
as innocent and virtuous people; and
have proved themselves lovers of God
by forsaking and enduring all things
for his sake. "It must needs be that
offences come, but woe to him by
whom they come."

W.D.

THINE EYE, YEA-W.A.

O God! whored art thou? and where
is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding
place! how long shall thy hand be
stayed, and thy pure eyes behold from
the heavens, the wrongs and sufferings
of thy people and of thy servants; and
thine eyes be penetrated with their
cries! How long, O Lord! shall they
thus suffer, before thine heart shall be
softened towards them, and thy bow-
els be moved with compassion towards
them? O Lord God Almighty, maker
of heaven, earth, and seas, and of all
things that in them are, and who control-
est and subjectest the devil and the

EYE-T.C.

ETERNAL-W.A.

EAR-T.C.

YEA-T.C.

W.D.

TOWARD-T.C.

ARE-T.C.

W.D.

HOW LONG-W.A.

THESE WRONGS
AND UNLAWFUL
OPPRESSIONS-W.A.

TOWARD-T.C.

TIMES AND

W.D.

W.D.

W.D.

The Sheriff and Jailor did not blame us for our attempt, it was the blacked, and cost the county a round sum; public opinion says, we ought to have been permitted to have made our escape, but then too they would have been on us, but none at must come out the State. We know that there could be no change sustained against us, and that the conduct of the mob—the murders at Hays's mill—the exterminating order of Governor Briggs, and the one sided, rascally proceedings of the Legislature, has damned the state of Missouri to all eternity. Gen. Atchison has proved himself to be as contemptible as any of our enemies. We have tried a long time to get our lawyers to draw us some petitions to the supreme judges of this state, but they have utterly refused; we have examined the laws, and drawn the petitions ourselves, and have obtained abundance of proof in counteract of the testimony that is against us—so that if the judges do not grant us our liberty they have got to act contrary to honor, evidence, law or justice, merely to please the mob; but we hope better things, and trust that before many days, God will do over our case, that we shall be set at liberty, and again in enjoy the society of the saints. We received some letters from our friends, last evening, two from Emma, one from D. C. Smith and one from Bishop Partridge, all breathing a kind and comforting spirit; we had been

OR TO TURN IT
 UP STREAM,
 W.A.
 HEADS-T.C.

REASONS.

103

W.D.

As to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter day saints: what is the Governor with his murderous party, but willows on the shore to stop the waters in their progress. As well might we argue that water is not water, because the mountain torrent sends down into and rises the crystal stream; or that fire is not fire because it can be quenched, as to say that our cause is down because renegades, liars, priests and murderers, who are like tenebrous of their crafts, and creeds have poured down upon us a flood of dirt and mire from their strong holds. No, they may rage, with all the powers of hell and pour forth their wrath, indignation and cruelty like the burning lava of mount Vesuvius, yet, shall Mormonism stand. Truth is Mormonism, and God is its author, by him we received our birth, by him we were called to a dissemination of his gospel in the beginning of the fulness of times, it was by him we received the book of Mormon, by him we remain unto this day and shall continue to remain till he is glorified; we are determined to endure tribulation as good soldiers, unto the end: when you read this, you will learn, that prison walls, iron dogs, seething hinges, guards and jailers have not destroyed our confidence, but we say, and that from experience, that they are calculated in their very nature to make the soul of the honest man, feel stronger than the powers of hell. But we must bring our epistle to a close, and send our respects to fathers, mothers, wives, and children, brothers and sisters, and be assured we hold them in sacred remembrance.

We should be glad to hear from elder Rigdon, George W. Robinson, and elder Culpoen, we remember them and would like to see their memory a part of the fulfilment of the last and the two friends, who mutually vowed to stand by each other; we could also mention Uncle John Smith and others; a word of consolation and a blessing would not come amiss from any body, while we are so closely whispered by the hour. Our respects and love to all the virtuous saints. We are, dear brethren, your fellow sufferers and

104

TIMES AND

prisoners of Jesus Christ for the gospel's sake, and for the hope of glory which is in us. Amen
 JOSEPH SMITH JR.,
 HYRUM SMITH,
 LYMAN WIGHT,
 CALDER BALDWIN,
 ALEXANDER MCKAY.

W.D.

TIMES AND SEASONS.

"TRUTH WILL PREVAIL."

Vol. 1. No. 9.] NAUVOO, ILLINOIS, JULY, 1848. [Whole No. 9.

AN EXTRACT OF A LETTER WRITTEN TO
 BISHOP PARTRIDGE, AND THE SAINTS
 IN GENERAL: BY J. SMITH, JR. AND
 OTHERS WHILE IN PRISON.

Liberty Jail, Clay co. Mo.
 [Continued to the Church of Latter
 Day Saints.]

W.D.

We continue to offer further reflections to Bishop Partridge and to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints; whom we love with a fervent love, and always bear them in mind in our prayers to our heavenly Father. It still seems to bear heavily in our minds, that the church would do well to secure the contract of land offered them by Mr. Isaac Galland, and cultivate the friendly feelings of that gentleman, inasmuch as he shall prove himself to be a man of honor and a friend to humanity: we think his letters breathe a kind and generous spirit. We suggest the idea of praying fervently for all men, particularly those who manifest any degree of sympathy for the suffering people of God. We think that the United States surveyor, Isaac Van Allen Esq. the attorney

SEASONS.

181

general, and Governor Lucas of the Iowa Territory, from the kindness they manifest, may be of great service to the church. It seems to be deeply impressed upon our minds, that the saints ought to lay hold of every opening, in order to obtain a foot hold on the earth, and be making all preparations that it will be their power for the terrible storms that are now gathering in the heavens, with darkness, and gloominess and thick darkness, as spoken by the prophet, which cannot be how long time hanging; for there seems to be a whispering by the angels of heaven, who have been intrusted with the council of these matters for the last days; and who have taken council together, and among the affairs transacted by that honorable council, they have taken cognizance of the murder of our beloved brethren at Hauns mill, as well as those who were martyred with D. W. Payton, and have passed some decisions pertaining in favor of the saints, these decisions will be made known in their time. We are desirous, that in your general conferences, every thing should be discussed, with candor and propriety, lest you grieve the Holy Spirit, which should at all times be poured out upon you, when you are exercised with the principles of righteousness, and are properly affected one towards another. Be careful to remember those who are in bondage, heaviness, and deep affliction for your sake. If there are any among you, who aspire after their own exaltation and opulence while their brethren are groaning in poverty, and laboring under sore trials and temptations, they cannot be benefited by the intercessions of the Holy Spirit: we ought at all times to be very careful that such high mindedness never have place in our hearts, but condescend to men of low estate, and with all low suffering, bear the infirmities of the weak. There are many called but few are chosen; and why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set upon the things of the world and are aspiring to the honors of men; they do not learn the lesson that the rights of the priesthood, are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven; and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled, only upon the

W.D.

OR-W.A.

UPON-T.C.

W.D.

PRICKS
T.C.

W.D.

AND-T.C.

BY KINDNESS, AND PURE
KNOWLEDGE, WHICH SHALL
GREATLY ENLARGE THE
SOUL - W.A.
THEN SHOWING FORTH
AFTERWARDS - T.C.

W.D.

GARNISH-T.C.

AND THY SCEPTER AN UN-
CHANGING SCEPTER OF RIGHT-
EOUSNESS AND TRUTH; AND
W.A.

START- SEC. 122

AND-W.A.

AND-W.A.

AND-W.A.

BEHOLD-W.A.

SO MUCH-W.A.

W.D.

THAT-W.A.

THIS-T.C.

THIS ONE-T.C.

ASPIRE-T.C.

182

TIMES AND

principles of righteousness, that they may be conferred upon us, it is true, but when we undertake to cover our sins, to gratify our pride, vain ambition, or to exercise dominion or compulsion over the souls of the children of men, in any degree of unrighteousness; behold the heavens withdraw themselves, the Spirit of the Lord is grieved, and then amen to the priesthood, or the authority of that man; behold ere he is aware, he is left to kick against the pricks, to persecute the saints, and to fight against God. We have learned by sad experience, that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, as they suppose, to begin to exercise unrighteous dominion, hence many are called but few are chosen. No power or influence can, or ought to be maintained by virtue of the priesthood, only by persuasion, by long suffering, by gentleness, by meekness and by love unfeigned; without hypocrisy, and without guile: reprove with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and afterwards showing forth an increase of love towards him whom thou hast reprove, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy, so that he may know, that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death. Let the soul be full of charity towards all men, and virtue guard thy thoughts unceasingly; then shall thy confidence wax strong in the presence of God, and the doctrines of the priesthood shall destil upon thy soul, as the dew from heaven; thy scepter shall be an unchanging scepter of righteousness, the Holy Ghost shall be thy constant companion, thy dominion shall be an everlasting dominion, the ends of the earth shall enquire after thy name; fools shall have thee in derision, hell shall rage against thee, while the pure in heart, the wise, the noble, and the virtuous shall seek council, authority, and blessing, constantly from under thy hand; thy people shall never be turned against thee by the testimony of traitors, although their influence shall cast thee into trouble, and into prisons, thou shalt be had in honor, and but for a small moment, and thy voice shall be more terrible in the midst of thy enemies, than the fierce lion, because of thy righteousness; and thy God shall stand

OUR-W.A.

CONTROL OR-W.A.

AND WHEN IT IS
WITHDRAWN,
W.A.

W.D.

UNTO HIMSELF
W.A.

THEY WILL
IMMEDIATELY
W.A.

BETIMES-W.A.

TOWARD-T.C.

THY BOWELS
ALSO-T.C.

TO THE HOUSEHOLD
OF FAITH, AND LET
W.A.

DOCTRINE-T.C.

W.D.

AND WITHOUT
COMPULSORY
MEANS IT SHALL
FLOW UNTO THEE
FOREVER AND
EVER. - W.A.

AND-W.A.

AND-W.A.

AND-W.A.

AND-W.A.

THEE-T.C.

SHALT-T.C.

THINE-T.C.

10

CHAPTER IV.

1. A Revelation given to Joseph and Martin, in Harmony, Pennsylvania, March, 1821, when Martin desired of the Lord to know whether Joseph had, in his possession, the record of the Nephites.

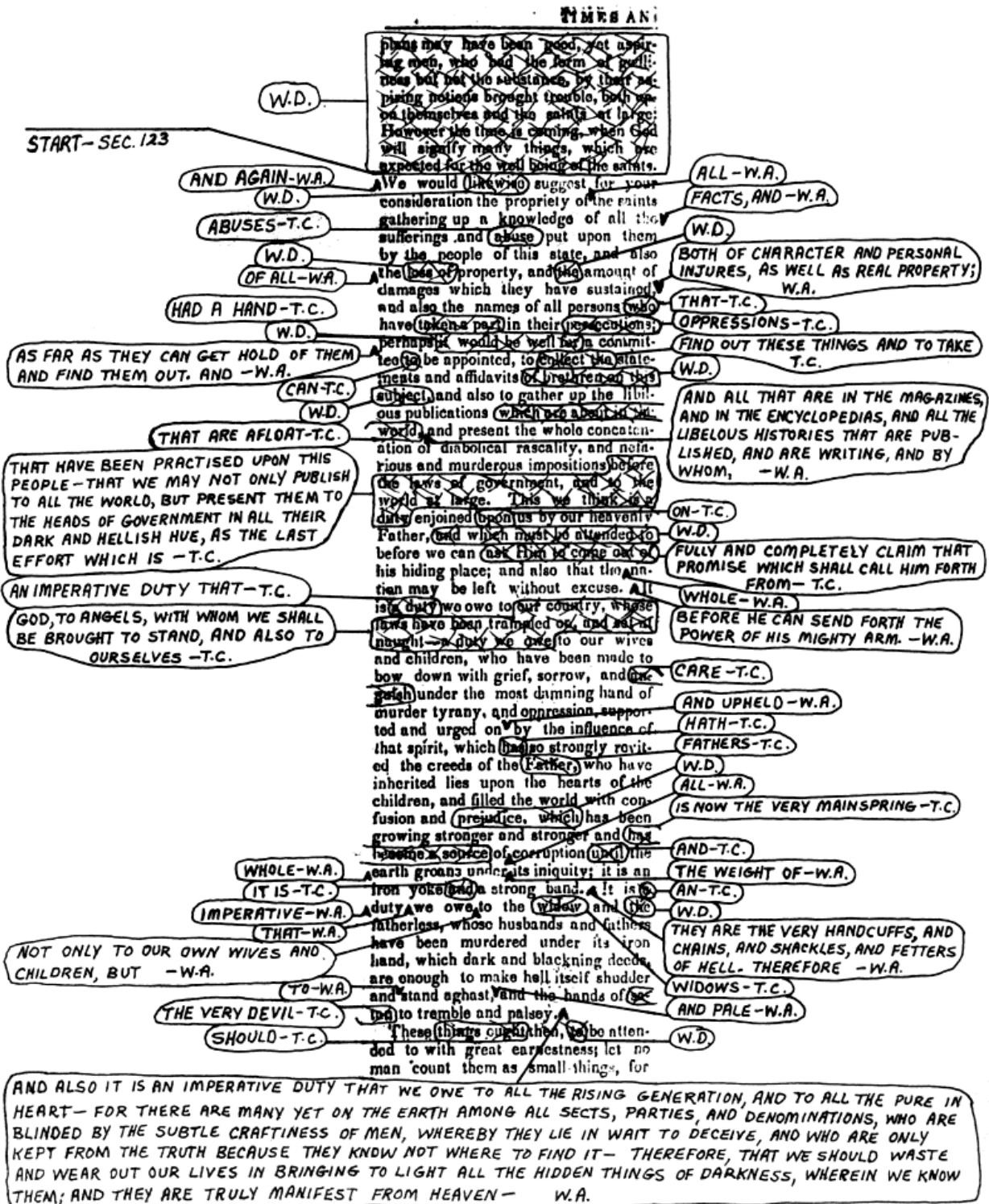
B. Behold, I say unto you, that my servant Martin has desired a witness from my hand, that my servant Joseph ~~has~~ got the things of which he ~~has~~ testified, and borne record that he ~~has~~ received of me.

2. And now, behold, this shall you say unto him: -- I the Lord am God, and ~~I~~ have given these things unto my servant Joseph; and ~~I~~ have commanded ~~him~~ that ~~he~~ should stand as a witness of these things; nevertheless I have caused ~~him~~ that ~~he~~ should enter into a covenant with me, that ~~he~~ should not show them except I command ~~him~~, and ~~he~~ has no power over them except I grant it unto ~~him~~; and ~~he~~ has a gift to translate the book; and I have commanded ~~him~~ that ~~he~~ shall pretend to no other gift, for I will grant ~~him~~ no other gift.

3. And verily I say unto you, that we shall come unto the inhabitants of the earth, if they will not be taken unto my words, for, behold, if they will not believe my words, they would not believe my servant Joseph, if it were possible that ~~he~~ could show them all things, ~~O ye~~ unbelieving, ~~ye~~ stiffnecked generation, mine anger is kindled against you!

4. Behold, verily I say, I have reserved ~~the~~ things of which I have spoken, which I have intrusted to my servant, for a wise purpose in me, and it shall be made known unto future generations: But this generation shall have my ~~words~~, ~~ye~~ and the ~~rest~~.

THROUGH YOU AND IN ADDITION TO YOUR TESTIMONY - W.A.



193

WD

TIMES AND

~~We subscribe ourselves your sincere~~
~~friends and brothers, in the bonds of~~

W.D.

the everlasting gospel, and prisoners of
Jesus Christ.

JOSEPH SMITH JR.,
HYMUS SMITH,
LYMAN WIGHT,
CALEB BALDWIN,
ALEXANDER McRAE.