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CASEY PAUL GRIFFITHS *and* MARY JANE WOODGER

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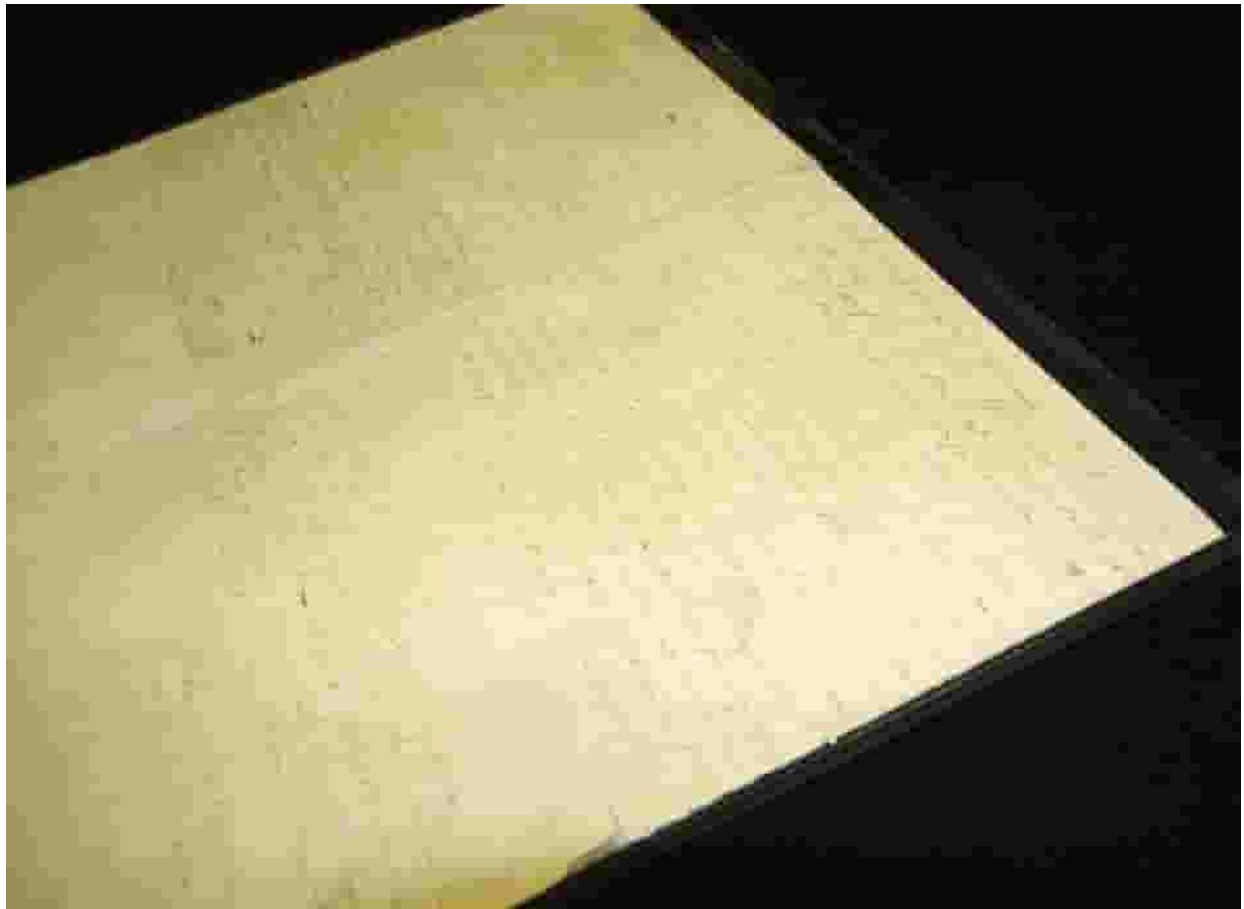
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#1 PRINTER'S MANUSCRIPT OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

– *Church History Library* –

Following the travails surrounding the lost manuscript of the Book of Mormon, Joseph Smith became understandably concerned about the rest of the work once it was translated in July 1829. While he and Martin Harris continued their search for a printer, Oliver Cowdery began work on a second copy of the manuscript to use during the printing process. The Prophet's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, later recalled, "A revelation came to Joseph commanding him to see that Oliver transcribed the whole work a second

time and never take both transcripts to the office but leave one and carry the other so that in case one was destroyed, the other would be left.”¹ We do not have a copy of this revelation, but in compliance with the Lord’s directions, Oliver and several scribes spent the next few months painstakingly copying down the entire manuscript word for word. After the destruction of most of the original manuscript in the cornerstone of the Nauvoo House, the printer’s manuscript became the earliest full text of the Book of Mormon and a treasure of inestimable value.²

The printer’s manuscript was drafted primarily by Oliver Cowdery, with assistance from Hyrum Smith and an unknown scribe (referred to in *The Joseph Smith Papers* as scribe 2). Analysis of the manuscript suggests that Cowdery wrote approximately 84 percent of the work, while scribe 2 recorded 15 percent, and Hyrum Smith wrote less than 1 percent. While it is difficult to determine exactly when the printer’s manuscript was written, scholars generally place its creation roughly between July 1829, when the translation process was finished, and mid-March 1830 when the book was printed at the Egbert B. Grandin shop in Palmyra, New York.³ At one point Cowdery and the other scribes probably fell behind in the work of copying the manuscript, and the original manuscript was used in the printing process. The section of the book (somewhere between Helaman 13:7 and the end of Mormon), nearly one-sixth of the current Book of Mormon text, is drawn directly from the original manuscript, and keeping it at the printing office must have caused considerable anxiety for Joseph Smith and his associates.⁴

Another incident that added to the Prophet’s wariness over the safety of the manuscript occurred in December 1829 when Abner Cole, the editor of the *Reflector* (a local newspaper in Palmyra), announced his intention to begin publishing extracts from the Book of Mormon. Writing under the pseudonym Obadiah Dogberry, Cole began circulating excerpts from the still-unpublished book without Joseph Smith’s permission. In January 1830 Cole produced his paper on “nights and Sundays” in Grandin’s printing office, allowing him access to pages of the Book of Mormon in the establishment.⁵ Cole’s plans were discovered one Sunday afternoon when

Hyrum Smith felt uneasy about the manuscript and asked Oliver Cowdery to accompany him to the printer's office to make sure the manuscript was safe. When they arrived at the printshop, they found Cole preparing to print excerpts from the book without permission. When Hyrum confronted Cole and asked him to stop printing, a conflict ensued. Lucy Mack Smith reported the incident, saying that Cole responded, "I don't care a damn for you—that damned Gold bible is going into my paper." Hyrum and Oliver both contended with him a long time to dissuade him from his purpose but finding they could do nothing with him they returned home and Mr. Cole issued his paper."⁶

After consulting together, Hyrum and Oliver sent for Joseph Smith, who was in Pennsylvania at the time. Lucy Mack Smith later recalled the event in vivid detail. When Joseph returned, he immediately went to the printshop, greeting Cole warmly and asking, "How do you do, Mr. Cole, you seem hard at work." When Joseph examined what Cole was printing, Joseph informed him of his right to publish and asked him to stop. In response Cole threw off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, and charged toward Joseph crying, "Do you want to fight, sir? . . . I will publish just as what I'm a mind to and now if you want to fight just come on." Joseph replied, "Well now Mr. Cole you had better keep on your coat for it's cold and I am not going to fight not any thing of that sort but you have got to stop printing my book, sir." Cole shot back, "If you think you are the best man just take off your coat." Joseph replied in a low significant tone, "There is law—and you will find out that if you did not know it before, but I shall not fight you for that would do no good and there is another way of disposing of the affair that will answer my purpose better than fighting." Cooling off, Cole agreed to submit to arbitration and cease his efforts to print the excerpts.⁷

Despite the efforts of Cole and others to interfere with the printing of the book, Joseph and his friends did come to trust the work of the printshop, especially John H. Gilbert, Grandin's compositor. Gilbert even persuaded Hyrum Smith, who was bringing the printer's manuscript to the office every morning, to let him take it home so that he could work on the manuscript,

which contained virtually no punctuation. Gilbert later recalled a conversation with Hyrum Smith and Martin Harris where he pointed out a grammatical error and asked if he should correct it. Martin spoke with Hyrum and then replied, “The Old Testament is ungrammatical, set it as it is written.” In the end Gilbert did make a number of grammatical changes—especially toward the end of the printing process. He also set the type for more than 500 of the 589 pages of the 1830 edition of the Book of Mormon.⁸

After the book was published in 1830, the printer’s manuscript was used in 1836–37 to prepare the 1837 edition of the Book of Mormon. At this time the manuscript was marked up by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery to make minor grammatical and stylistic corrections. After he left the Church in 1838, Oliver Cowdery kept the printer’s manuscript in his care. Just before his death in 1850 in Richmond, Missouri, Oliver charged his fellow witness David Whitmer with the care and protection of the manuscript.⁹ For the remainder of his life, Whitmer maintained his testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon and occasionally showed the manuscript to visitors. In 1878, a tornado devastated Richmond, destroying a large portion of the city. In an interview given that same year, Whitmer related that “his barn and dwelling having been destroyed, save and except the only room in his house in which the record, or manuscript, was kept. This was spared, not even the ceiling being seriously impaired. This event by the whole family and connections is accepted as a miraculous interposition of Divine Providence.”¹⁰

In 1903, one of David Whitmer’s descendants sold the printer’s manuscript, along with a number of historical artifacts, to the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. It remained in their custody until 2017, when leadership of the RLDS Church (which changed its name to Community of Christ in 2001) announced it was open to “selling historic assets and other non-investment properties that are not essential for the church’s mission.”¹¹ A short time after this declaration, it was announced that a private group of donors had purchased the printers manuscript and

donated it to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.¹² At the time it was the highest price ever paid for a manuscript. Community of Christ leaders acknowledged that parting with the manuscript was painful for some of their members, but “we know the people who take stewardship of this important document will treasure it and continue to care for it for future generations.”¹³

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- 1 “Lucy Mack Smith, History, 1844–1845, Page [1], bk. 9,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 2 <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/lucy-mack-smith-history-1844-1845/106>.
 - 2 “Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, circa August 1829–circa January 1830, Page i,” Historical Introduction, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, i, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/printers-manuscript-of-the-book-of-mormon-circa-august-1829-circa-january-1830/1>.
 - 3 “Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, i.
 - 4 The Original Manuscript of the Book of Mormon, ed. Royal Skousen (Provo, UT: The Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 2001), 6.
 - 5 “Letter from Oliver Cowdery, 28 December 1829,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 4, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-oliver-cowdery-28-december-1829/1>.
 - 6 “Lucy Mack Smith, History,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 9:10–11.
 - 7 Ibid., 9:11.
 - 8 “Printer’s Manuscript of the Book of Mormon,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, i.
 - 9 Ibid.
 - 10 Lyndon W. Cook, ed., *David Whitmer Interviews: A Restoration Witness*, (Orem, UT: Grandin Book Company, 1991), 29.
 - 11 “Time to Act: Questions and Answers,” September 20, 2017, <https://www.cofchrist.org/Common/Cms/resources/Documents/QA-Time-to-Act.pdf>.
 - 12 “Church Buys Printer’s Manuscript of Book of Mormon from Community of Christ,” *Church Newsroom*, September 20, 2017,

<https://www.lds.org/church/news/church-buys-printers-manuscript-of-book-of-mormon-from-community-of-christ?lang=eng>.

- 13 “Time to Act: Questions and Answers,” September 20, 2017.

Edward Partidge

by the seclusion of the Land on the 6th day of August 1890, have signed and sworn to the following:

Levin Jackson of Jackson county; and *Wm. H. Blagden*, a resident of said county.

the following described piece or parcel of land, being a part of section No. sixteen township No. forty and
range thirteen north, east of the Indian survey, and state of Missouri, and is bounded as follows, viz:—beginning
eighty rods E. of the N. W. corner of S. Sec. Thence S. one
hundred & four rods thence E. seventy fives rods S. to a mound
thence N. 31° W. on the west side six rods S. E. thence N. 72° E. forty eight
rods to the N. line of S. Sec. Thence N. on section forty four rods to the
place of beginning containing thirty three acres be the same
more or less subject to roads and highways

And she here listed the following dispossessed property, viz:—Sundry articles of furniture valued thirty seven dollars,—also two beds bedding and feathers valued forty four dollars fifty cents,—also three axes and other tools valued eleven dollars and twenty five cents

[illegible]

DE WILDEBOER, 1997

Abstract

Table 1

APRANT, APRINTS 044, 047

Call 1-800-
ARCHIVE
74
3264

Req No: 3450
 CR No: 518
 Design of request: CR
 Requested security defn: 22-sub-20
 CR Code: CR

Description
 System, Rev. 1981-1978.
 Title
 Study of organization and membership 1971-
 Issue: 818-81-8111 NUMBER, NUMBERING NUMBER

#2 DEED OF CONSECRATION

– Church History Library –

Joseph Smith and the early Saints were eager to build up Zion and to learn the principles and laws upon which that holy city would be established. In February of 1831, the Lord revealed that one of the laws under which Zion was to operate was the law of consecration. The law of consecration requires “that all members of the Church shall consecrate their property (including time, talents, and material wealth) to the Church for the building of the kingdom of God and the establishment of Zion.”¹⁴

In his revelation to Joseph Smith, the Lord instructed Joseph on how consecration was to be carried out: “And behold, thou wilt remember the poor, and consecrate of thy properties for their support that which thou hast to impart unto them, with a covenant and a deed which cannot be broken” (D&C 42:30).

The law of consecration was first and foremost a covenant—a voluntary agreement between the participant and the Lord. This covenant was manifest through a deed—a contract filled out and signed by the individual that bequeathed his properties to the Church. “Consecration deeds listed the real and personal property each individual owned, including animals, tools, and bedding.” Though the property then belonged to the Church, “the Church never took possession of it. The deeds were a commitment of faith more than a legal or financial transaction.”¹⁵

In fact, the property belonged neither to the Church nor the consecrating individual. The law of consecration operated under the principle of stewardship: that all things belong to the Lord and that members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints are made stewards over their

portion. Accordingly, land that once was deeded through consecration was called a “portion,” a “stewardship,” or an “inheritance.”¹⁶

To manage the allocation of these “portions,” the Church created the order of Enoch, or, the united order: the legal administrative agency for carrying out the law of consecration. Under the united order, each man was deeded an equal share according to the needs of his family and his ability to expand his stewardship.

Sadly, the first two attempts to implement the united order ultimately failed, and it was suspended—and along with it, the deeds of consecration. With the suspension of the united order, it remained for the Lord to “adapt the requirements of his higher law [the law of consecration] to the capacity of the Saints.”¹⁷ Today, members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints live the law of consecration through fast offerings, welfare donations, and tithing.¹⁸

¹⁴ William O. Nelson, “To Prepare a People,” *Ensign*, January 1979, 19.

¹⁵ Consecration deeds 1854–1867. Church History Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah.

¹⁶ Marion G. Romney, “Living the Principles of the Law of Consecration,” *Ensign*, February 1979, 3.

¹⁷ Nelson, “To Prepare a People,” 22.

¹⁸ Romney, “Living the Principles,” 4.



#3 PIPE FRAGMENTS FROM THE KIRTLAND ASHERY

– *Church History Museum* –

On February 27, 1833, Joseph Smith received a revelation with far-reaching consequences for the Latter-day Saints. Although contemporary sources say little about the circumstances when the Word of Wisdom was

received, Brigham Young later recalled that heavy tobacco use, including smoking and chewing, among the members of the School of the Prophets led to Joseph's inquiry. In an 1868 discourse, Brigham recalled, "The first school of the prophets was held in a small room situated over the Prophet Joseph's kitchen, in a house which belong to Bishop [Newell K.] Whitney, and which was attached to his store. . . . The brethren came to that place for hundreds of miles to attend school in a little room probably no larger than eleven by fourteen [feet]."

Though Brigham was not part of this group, he likely heard the circumstances of the revelation from his contemporaries who did attend the School of the Prophets. "When they assembled together in this room after breakfast, the first they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom and spit all over the room, and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken," Brigham told his audience. "Often when the Prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke." Brigham continued, "This, and the complaints of his wife at having to clean so filthy a floor, made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the Elders in using tobacco, and the revelation know as the Word of Wisdom was the result of his inquiry."¹⁹

Throughout the nineteenth century and even into our day, the Word of Wisdom has continued to be a living revelation, with prophets and apostles from each era warning against new substances or re-emphasizing the importance of parts of the revelation. The Word of Wisdom always distinguished the Saints from their contemporaries, but it truly became a signature part of Latter-day Saint practice when President Heber J. Grant made abstinence from tea, coffee, tobacco, alcohol, and harmful drugs a requirement for a member to receive a temple recommend. More recently Church leaders have issued clarifications that several substances, including vaping or e-cigarettes, green tea, and coffee-based products are against the Word of Wisdom. Church leaders also counseled in August 2019 that

“substances such as marijuana and opioids should be used only for medicinal purposes as prescribed by a competent physician.”²⁰

The language used in the Word of Wisdom that designates the revelation as being sent by “greeting, not by commandment or constraint, but by revelation & the word of wisdom”²¹ has at times raised questions about how the early Saints observed the Word of Wisdom. For instance, there were immediate questions about the meaning of “hot drinks” and what kind of beverages the revelation was asking the Saints to abstain from. According to one reminiscent account the summer after the revelation was given, both Joseph and Hyrum Smith explicitly identified coffee and tea as the substances prohibited in the Word of Wisdom.²² Other sources indicate varying degrees of adherence to the instructions given in the revelation. Historians working with the Joseph Smith Papers project have noted that “some, like Zebedee Coltrin, Joel Johnson, and John Tanner, chose to abstain from tea, coffee, tobacco, and alcohol almost immediately; others, like Joseph Smith’s wife Emma, who offered weary travelers tea and coffee upon their arrival in Kirtland in May 1833, apparently felt that using at least some of the items listed in the revelation was acceptable under some circumstances.”²³

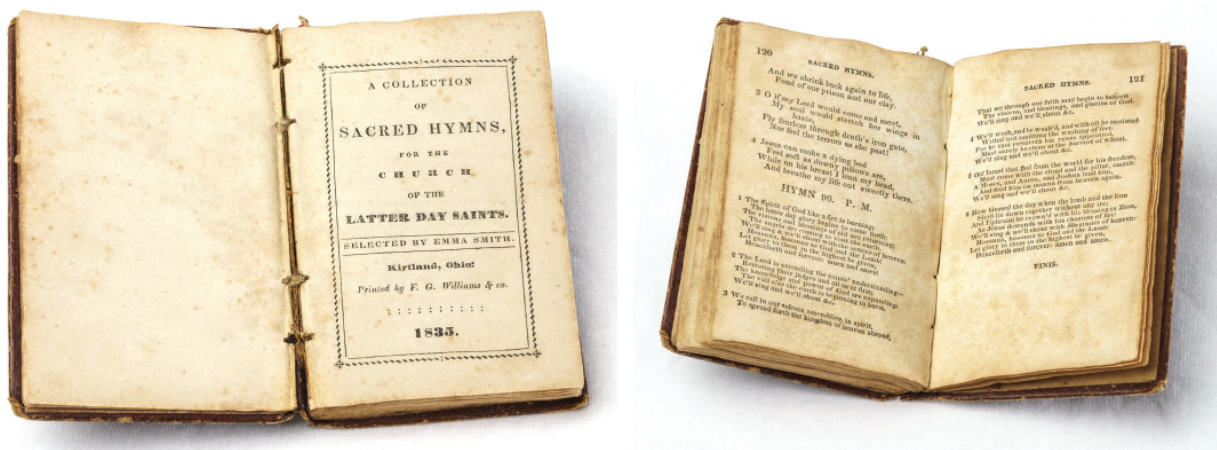
Joseph F. Smith later commented that the gradual application of the Word of Wisdom that took place in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was intended to allow the Saints time to adapt to the new commandment. In a 1913 general conference address he declared, “The reason undoubtedly why the Word of Wisdom was given—as not by ‘commandment or restraint’ was that at that time, at least, if it had been given as a commandment it would have brought every man, addicted to the use of these noxious things, under condemnation; so the Lord was merciful and gave them a chance to overcome, before He brought them under the law. Later, it was announced from this stand, by President Brigham Young, that the Word of Wisdom was a revelation and a command of the Lord. I desired to mention that fact, because I do not want you to feel that we are under no restraint. We do not want to come under condemnation.”²⁴

Though portions of the Word of Wisdom may have taken a gradual journey from being sound counsel to becoming a commandment, there is strong evidence that many Saints in Kirtland began to take revelation to heart immediately. One reminiscence about the School of the Prophets records, “When the Word of Wisdom was first presented by the Prophet Joseph (as he came out of the translating room) and was read to the School, there were twenty out of the twenty-one who used tobacco and they all immediately threw their tobacco and pipes into the fire. There were members as follows: Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, William Smith, Fredrick G. Williams, Orson Hyde (who had the charge of the school), Zebedee Coltrin, Sylvester Smith, Joseph Smith Sen., Levi Hancock, Martin Harris, Sidney Rigdon, Newell K. Whitney, Samuel H. Smith, John Murdock, Lyman Johnson, and Ezra Thayer.”²⁵

Recent archaeological excavations in Kirtland support these details. Nearby the Whitney Store in Kirtland was an ashery, another business operated by Newell K. Whitney. The ashery utilized ashes brought in from the Kirtland area to produce potash, pearl ash, and other valuable commodities. It is likely that the ashes from the Whitney Store ended up in this location. During an archaeological dig just south of the site of the Kirtland Ashery in 2000, historian Mark Staker found several pipe fragments. It is possible these fragments are remnants of the pipes thrown into the fireplace of the Whitney Store when the Word of Wisdom was first given. Staker and his team date a layer above the pipe fragments to 1842, and though it is difficult to date precisely, the fragments are in a possible location that might align with the date the revelation was given. Given these factors there is a good chance that some, if not all, of the pipe fragments came from the Whitney fireplace. One the side of one of the pipe stems the name “Johnson” is stamped, which may indicate the pipe belonged to Lyman Johnson, who was present at the time of the revelation. However, absolute certainty is impossible because there were many Johnsons in the area, or the name may be from the manufacturer.²⁶ The pipe fragments are further evidence of a story we are still living as the current

prophets and apostles leading the Church continue to receive guidance from God as to how best manage the sacred stewardship of the human body.

- 19 Brigham Young Discourse, February 8, 1868, Provo, Utah, in *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young*, ed. Richard S. Van Wagoner, (Salt Lake City: The Smith-Petit Foundation, 2009), 2532.
- 20 “Statement on the Word of Wisdom,” August 15, 2019, accessed September 18, 2019,
<https://newsroom.churchofjesuschrist.org/article/statement-word-of-wisdom-august-2019>
- 21 “Revelation, 27 February 1833 [D&C 89],” p. [113], *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed September 17, 2019,
<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-27-february-1833-dc-89/1>, spelling and punctuation standardized.
- 22 Historical Introduction, “Revelation, 27 February 1833 [D&C 89],” p. [113], *The Joseph Smith Papers*, accessed September 17, 2019,
<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-27-february-1833-dc-89/1>
- 23 Ibid.
- 24 Joseph F. Smith, Conference Report, Oct. 1913, 14.
- 25 Merle H. Grattam, ed., *Salt Lake School of the Prophets: Minute Book 1883*, (Palm Desert, Calif.: ULC, 1981) 37.
- 26 Mark L. Staker, “‘Thou Art the Man:’ Newell K. Whitney in Ohio,” *BYU Studies*, 42, no. 1 (2003), Figure 7, 107.



#4 THE FIRST LATTER-DAY SAINT HYMNBOOK

— Community of Christ Library —

In the summer of 1830, Joseph Smith received a revelation intended to provide comfort and counsel to his wife, Emma Hale Smith. The revelation designated Emma as an “elect lady” (D&C 25:3) and gave her a charge to “expound scriptures, and to exhort the church, according as it shall be given thee by my Spirit” (D&C 25:7). It also provided Emma with a specific task “to make a selection of sacred hymns” (D&C 25:11).²⁷ Five years after this charge was given, Emma and a number of her associates produced the first hymnal intended specifically for use by the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Thus began a long and fruitful tradition of hymnody.

Emma’s most important collaborator in producing the hymnbook was William W. Phelps, a fiery Yankee newspaper editor, who converted to the Church around the same time Emma was given her revelation.²⁸ The next mention of the hymnal project in early Church records came on April 30, 1832, in a meeting of the Literary Firm, the publishing arm of the Church,

where it was decided “that the Hymns selected by sister Emma be corrected by br. William W. Phelps.”²⁹ Within a few months, the *Church Newspaper, The Evening and the Morning Star*, began publishing Protestant hymns with revisions by Phelps, and the following year the first original Church hymns began to appear in the Star.³⁰

A major setback occurred in 1833 when the Church printing office in Missouri was destroyed. A new printing office was established in December 1833 in Kirtland, Ohio, and work began anew on the hymnbook. In September 1835 the First Presidency renewed its stated desire to complete the hymnal, noting it was “decided that Sister Emma Smith proceed to make a selection of sacred hymns, according to the revelation [sic], and that President W. W. Phelps be appointed to revise and arrange them for printing.”³¹ In a letter written to his wife, Sally, a few months later, Phelps noted, “The hymn book is not likely to progress as fast as I wish, but we are all kept busy.”³²

Though the notation on its first page shows a publication date of 1835, the first hymnbook likely appeared in early 1836.³³ It was titled *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of the Latter Day Saints*, reflecting one of the early names of the Church (the official name of the Church was not revealed until 1838; see D&C 115:4).³⁴ The first hymnbook was small enough to fit in a coat pocket—only 3 inches by 4½ inches and 132 pages long—and contained 90 hymns. The hymnbook also contained no musical notations, only the texts of the hymns. It was common practice at the time to sing the words of the hymns to different tunes. For instance, “Now Let Us Rejoice” and “The Spirit of God” were both originally sung to the tune of “Hosanna,” essentially the same music used presently for “The Spirit of God.”³⁵

More than half of the hymns in the book came as a result of W. W. Phelps’ work. Phelps wrote 25 original hymns and adapted 37 other compositions. Approximately 50 hymns chosen were from other denominations.³⁶ Phelps is also the likely author of the hymnbook’s preface, which reads in part, “In

order to sing by the Spirit, and with the understanding, it is necessary that the church of the Latter Day Saints should have a collection of ‘SACRED HYMNS,’ adapted to their faith and belief in the gospel.” Phelps also expressed his hope for future poets and musicians of Zion to continue his work, writing, “Notwithstanding the church, as it were, is still in its infancy, yet, as the song of the righteous is a prayer unto God, it is sincerely hoped that the following collection, selected with an eye single to his glory, may answer every purpose till more are composed, or till we are blessed with a copious variety of the songs of Zion.”³⁷

The first hymnal contained a number of favorites still popular with Church members today. Some of the texts were already favorites among Christians, adapted to the millenarian expectations of the Saints. For instance, the text of Handel’s “Joy to the World” was adapted to read “the Lord will come” instead of “the Lord is come,” and instead of “heaven and nature” singing to welcome Christ’s advent, the text became “and saints and angels sing.”³⁸ The hymnbook also included a few entries focused on specific beliefs, such as the Israelite origins of the Native Americans. One hymn reads,

O stop and tell me, Red Man,
Who are ye? why you roam?
And how you get your living?
Have you no God;—no home?
“Yet hope within us lingers,
“As if the Spirit spoke:—
‘He’ll come for your redemption,
‘And break your Gentile yoke:”³⁹

Perhaps the most famous hymn from the original collection is the last listed in the hymnal: “The Spirit of God.” The printed version of the hymn here includes two verses not included in the current hymnbook (1985). These verses make reference to the early temple ordinances⁴⁰ performed in the Kirtland Temple:

We'll wash, and be wash'd, and with oil be anointed

Withal not omitting the washing of feet:

For he that receiveth his penny appointed,

Must surely be clean at the harvest of wheat.⁴¹

It appears the hymnal was printed in time for the dedication of the Kirtland temple. Joseph Smith makes reference to singing “The Spirit of God” on the day the dedicatory prayer was given, March 27, 1836.⁴² On the same day the history of the Church records, “A voice was heard like the sound of a rushing mighty wind which filled the Temple and all the congregation simultaneously arose being moved upon by an invisible power many began to speak in Tongues and prophecy others saw glorious visions and I beheld the Temple was filled with angels.”⁴³

The first hymnbook, though small in size, launched the grand tradition of worship through music in the Church. The second hymnal, published in Nauvoo in 1841, included 304 hymns, nearly triple the number of its predecessor.⁴⁴ Today members of the Church continue to worship Jesus Christ through song and gather music and poetry reflecting the unique beliefs of the Restored Gospel.⁴⁵ All of this grew from the Lord’s counsel to Emma Smith: “For my soul delighteth in the song of the heart; yea, the song of the righteous is a prayer unto me, and it shall be answered with a blessing upon their heads” (D&C 25:12).⁴⁶

27 “Revelation, July 1830–C [D&C 25],” p. 34, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-july-1830-c-dc-25/1>.

28 See Bruce Van Orden, *We’ll Sing and We’ll Shout: The Life and Times of W. W. Phelps*, (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, 2018), 32–33.

29 “Minute Book 2,” p. 26, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/minute-book-2/28>.

30 “Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835,” Historical Introduction, *The Joseph*

Smith Papers, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/collection-of-sacred-hymns-1835/6>.

- 31 “Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*.
- 32 Ibid.
- 33 Ibid.
- 34 Ibid. See also “Revelation, 26 April 1838 [D&C 115],” p. 32, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-26-april-1838-dc-115/1>.
- 35 “Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*; see also Karen Lynn Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns: The Stories and Messages*, (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1988), 9; Van Orden, *We’ll Sing*, 162–63.
- 36 Van Orden, *We’ll Sing*, 162, 498.
- 37 “Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835,” p. [iii-iv], *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/collection-of-sacred-hymns-1835/5>.
- 38 Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns*, 214; “Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835,” 21, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/collection-of-sacred-hymns-1835/23>. The wording of “The Lord is come” was restored in the 1985 edition of the Church hymnbook.
- 39 “Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835,” 83, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/collection-of-sacred-hymns-1835/85>.
- 40 See “History, 1838–1856, volume B-1 [1 September 1834–2 November 1838],” 695, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/149>.
- 41 “Collection of Sacred Hymns, 1835,” 121, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/collection-of-sacred-hymns-1835/123>.
- 42 “Journal, 1835–1836,” 184, *The Joseph Smith Papers*, <https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/journal-1835-1836/187>.
- 43 “History, 1838–1856, volume B-1 [1 September 1834–2 November 1838] [addenda],” p. 3 [addenda], *The Joseph Smith Papers*,

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-b-1-1-september-1834-2-november-1838/306>.

44 Davidson, *Our Latter-day Hymns*, 10.

45 “Hymnbook and Children’s Songbook Revisions,”

<https://www.lds.org/music/new-music>.

46 “Revelation, July 1830–C [D&C 25],” p. 35, *The Joseph Smith Papers*,

<https://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/revelation-july-1830-c-dc-25/2>.

And your own to give them,
That will be better than a word.

HYMN 10. P. 36.

1. *Thou art of Israel,*
Our only God,
Who when the world was young,
Thou wast the only God,
Thou wast the only God,
Thou wast the only God.

2. *We know thee in our hearts,*
Thou art our God,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love.

3. *How long the time we live,*
As we have seen,
And when the time is past,
We have seen, we have seen,
We have seen, we have seen,
We have seen, we have seen.

4. *The children of men,*
Thou art our God,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love.

And let us give thee,
For the love of God,
And the love of God, in love.

1. *The world of Israel,*
Thou art our God,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love.

HYMN 11. P. 37.

1. *Thou art our God,*
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love.

2. *Thou art our God,*
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love.

3. *Thou art our God,*
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love.

4. *Thou art our God,*
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love,
Thou art our God, in love.

Liberty gait Colney Green, Yorks. March 26th 1837.

To the church of Endurance Saints at Quincy Illinois and
Baltimore and to Bishop Doane in particular your
humble servant Joseph Smith Jr. greets you for the love of
Christ's sake and for the saints taken and held in the power
of darkness under the exterminating sign of his great
name the wickedness of his men company with the
gotten prisoners and beloved brethren under the
name of the Holy Spirit in the name of the Father
and with you all greetings. May the grace of
the Father and of Jesus Christ and his Father's Father
be upon you all and about with you for ever
May his grace be multiplied unto you for the recovery
of Love And many faith and virtue and knowledge
and temperance and patience and godliness and
brotherly kindness and charity be in you and it
and that you may not be taken in anything nor
unprofitable. It is common in me known that the people
you are well acquainted with the songs and the
hymns and canticles that is written upon us
whereas we have been taken prisoners charged fully
with every kind of evil and thrown into prison and
are with strong walls surrounded with a strong guard
who continually watch day and night as diligently
as the devil is in tempting and laying snares for
the people of God. Therefore dearly and beloved Brethren
and sisters be ye ready and willing to say at
all times to your fellowships and to all men

#5 LETTER TO THE CHURCH AND EDWARD PARTRIDGE

– *Church History Library* –

While Joseph Smith and his companions languished in Liberty Jail, their thoughts naturally turned to the plight of the Saints, particularly their own families. The prisoners received visits from their families only on a handful of occasions, and the news sent through letters was uniformly distressing. One particularly poignant letter from Emma Smith came on March 7, 1839, when she wrote, “Dear Husband. . . . No one but God, knows the reflections of my mind and the feelings of my heart when I left our house and home, and almost of everything that we possessed excepting our little children, and took our journey out of the state of Missouri, leaving you shut up in that lonesome prison. . . . The recollection is more than human nature ought to bear, and if God does not record our sufferings and avenge our wrongs on them that are guilty, I shall be sadly mistaken.”⁴⁷

Recognizing the obvious parallels between his internment and the imprisonment of the ancient Apostles of Jesus Christ, Joseph responded with a series of letters meant to bolster the faith of the suffering Saints and provide comfort in the midst of their travails. “The prison epistles,” consisting primarily of two letters addressed to “the Church of Latter-day Saints at Quincy, Illinois, and scattered abroad and to Bishop [Edward] Partridge in particular,”⁴⁸ contain some of the most sublime language recorded by Joseph Smith. In the genre of the prison epistle, they rank among the most beautiful pieces of literature contributed by Latter-day Saints to the rest of the world.

Even classifying what the prison epistles are is difficult. The two letters, dated March 20 and 22, 1839, are written in the handwriting of Alexander McRae and Caleb Baldwin, with corrections by Joseph Smith, and carry the

signatures of Joseph and Hyrum Smith, Lyman Wight, Caleb Baldwin, and Alexander McRae.⁴⁹ It is clear that Joseph dictated the letters with assistance from the other prisoners, and most of the letters consist of their steady voice, listing the wrongs inflicted on the Latter-day Saints and offering encouragement and assurance. At times in the letter, Joseph begins to speak in revelatory language, offering answers and comfort from the Savior. These passages often speak directly to Joseph Smith. In some ways it is more accurate to describe the epistles as a dialogue between God and one of His servants concerning the nature of evil, suffering, and when and how divine power is wielded in the face of such adversity. In this sense, the Liberty Jail epistles take their place beside the Book of Job, Ecclesiastes, and countless other works as a discussion of the ageless question: Why do bad things happen to good people?

The most striking example of this conversation is found in the first letter, in which the Prophet asks, “O God where art thou and where is the pavilion that covereth thy hiding place? How long shall thy hand be stayed and thine eye yea thy pure eye behold from the eternal heavens the wrongs of thy people and of thy servants and thine ear be penetrated with their cries?”⁵⁰ Joseph continued, elaborating that upon hearing the suffering of the Saints, “the flood gates of our hearts were hoisted and our eyes were a fountain of tears.”⁵¹ He also added how “the voice of a friend . . . awakens and calls into action every sympathetic feeling . . . and when the heart is sufficiently contrite then the voice of inspiration steals along and whispers, ‘My Son, peace be unto thy soul. Thine adversity and afflictions shall be but a small moment and then if thou endure it well God shall exalt thee on high.’”⁵² The voice of inspiration assured Joseph and the Church of the future promise of the work of Restoration, declaring, “How long can rolling waters remain impure? What power shall stay the heavens? As well might man stretch forth his puny arm to stop the Missouri River in its decreed course or to turn it up stream as to hinder the Almighty from pouring down knowledge from heaven upon the heads of the Latter-day Saints.”⁵³

The second epistle, sent just two days later, contains profound counsel on the nature of Christlike leadership. The same mixture of the voices of the aggrieved Prophet, his coprisoners, and the calm tones of Deity abound throughout the epistle. The principles contained in the letter underscore Latter-day Saint conceptions of Christlike leadership: “Behold there are many called but few are chosen. And why are they not chosen? Because their hearts are set so much upon the things of this world and aspire to the honors of men that they do not learn this one lesson that the rights of priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven and that the powers of heaven cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principles of righteousness.”⁵⁴

Perhaps Joseph was reflecting on his rough handling at the hands of his Missouri captors, because the epistle continues, “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 they will immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. hence ma[n]y [are] called but few are chosen.” Instead of boasting about the powers of the priesthood, the epistles counsels, “No power or influence can or ought to be maintained by virtue of the Priesthood only by persuasion by long suffering by gentleness and meekness and by love unfeigned by kindness by pure knowledge which shall greatly enlarge the soul without hypocrisy and without guile reproving betimes with sharpness when moved upon by the Holy Ghost and then showing forth afterword an increase of love toward him whom thou hast reprovéd lest he esteem the[e] to be his enemy that he may know that thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.”⁵⁵

The most poignant part of the epistles comes when a heartrending list of the afflictions the Prophet and his friends faced is listed: “If the heavens gather blackness and all the elements combine to hedge up the way and above all if the very jaws of hell shall gap open her mouth wide after thee know thou my son that all these things shall give thee experience and shall be for thy good. The son of man hath descended below them all art thou greater than he?” The last assurance comes with a note of foreboding: “Hold on thy

way and the priesthood shall remain with thee for their bounds are set they cannot pass. Thy days are known and thy years shall not be numbered less. Therefore, fear not what man can do for God shall be with you for ever and ever.”⁵⁶

Apparently, Joseph Smith planned a larger series of epistles to the Church but was cut short by his departure from Liberty Jail in early April 1839. The prisoners were taken to Daviess County, Missouri, where they were arraigned and charged with “treason, murder, arson, larceny, theft and stealing.”⁵⁷ When the prisoners requested a change of venue, the judge in Daviess County initially rejected their pleas and then wrote out a new order without a date, name, or place. According to Hyrum Smith, a sheriff and armed company of guards drove the prisoners to the Missouri frontier and showed them the blank order. Hyrum recalled, “The Sheriff showed us the mittimus, before referred to, without date or signature, and said that Judge Birch told him never to carry us to Boon County, and never to show the Mittimus; and said he, I shall take a good drink of grog and go to bed; and you may do as you have a mind to. Three others of the guard drank pretty freely of whiskey, sweetened with honey; they also went to bed, and were soon asleep, and the other guard went along with us and helped to saddle the horses.”⁵⁸ During the prisoners’ time in Liberty Jail, public opinion began to turn against the Missouri government, and the Missourians hoped to escape more embarrassment and a legal entanglement by allowing the prisoners to escape.⁵⁹ Ten days later, the prisoners reunited with their families and the rest of the refugee Saints in Quincy, Illinois.

Reflecting back on his time in Liberty Jail brought mixed emotions to the Prophet. Only days before he left the jail, he wrote to Emma, “We cannot get into a worse hole then this is, we shall not stay here but one night besides this if that thank God, we shall never cast a lingering wish after Liberty in Clay County, Missouri. We have enough of it to last forever.”⁶⁰ At the same time, the suffering of the Prophet and his companions in Liberty Jail brought a new closeness between the Prophet and his Savior. Before he was jailed, the

Prophet was witness to Christ in all His glory, but now their relationship was tempered in the fires of adversity. There was a new appreciation for the truths of the gospel and the close associations of friends and family. In another letter written from Liberty Jail, Joseph summarized the purifying effects of his suffering: “No tongue can tell what inexpressible Joy it gives a man to see the face of one who has been a friend after having been enclosed in the walls of a prison for five months it seems to me that my heart will always be more tender after this than ever it was before.” He added, “For my part I think I never could have felt as I now do if I had not suffered the wrongs that I have suffered all things shall work together for good to them that love God.”⁶¹ Liberty Jail will always be a place of profundity for the Latter-day Saints. The writings of the Prophet and the voice of the Lord transformed a lonely jail from a place of suffering into a place of sanctification, from a wretched prison into a temple of learning.

47 “Letter from Emma Smith, 7 March 1839,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 37, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-from-emma-smith-7-march-1839/1>, spelling and punctuation corrected.

48 “Letter to the Church and Edward Partridge, 20 March 1839,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 1, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-the-church-and-edward-partridge-20-march-1839/1>, spelling and punctuation corrected.

49 “Letter to the Church and Edward Partridge, 20 March 1839,” 1.

50 Ibid., 3, spelling and punctuation corrected.

51 Ibid., 7.

52 Ibid., 8, spelling and punctuation corrected.

53 Ibid., 15, spelling and punctuation corrected.

54 “Letter to Edward Partridge and the Church, circa 22 March 1839,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 2, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-edward-partridge-and-the-church-circa-22-march-1839/2>, spelling and punctuation corrected.

55 “Letter to Edward Partridge and the Church, circa 22 March 1839,” 3, spelling and punctuation corrected.

56 Ibid., 4, spelling and punctuation corrected.

- 57 “History, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843],” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 1617, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/history-1838-1856-volume-d-1-1-august-1842-1-july-1843/262>.
- 58 “History, 1838–1856, volume D-1 [1 August 1842–1 July 1843],” 1618 .
- 59 See Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith: Rough Stone Rolling* (New York: Knopf, 2005), 382.
- 60 “Letter to Emma Smith, 4 April 1839,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 2, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-emma-smith-4-april-1839/2>, spelling and punctuation corrected.
- 61 “Letter to Presendia Huntington Buell, 15 March 1839,” *The Joseph Smith Papers*, 1, <http://www.josephsmithpapers.org/paper-summary/letter-to-presendia-huntington-buell-15-march-1839/1>.

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