

Joseph Smith taught that in the growth process, Latter-day Saints would be at vastly different levels of gospel advancement, with considerable divergence in their personal beliefs. He left doors wide open for reinterpretation and evolution in LDS belief, both personal and institutional.

“I AM LIBERAL IN MY SENTIMENTS TOWARDS ALL MEN”

EXPLORING THE MIND OF JOSEPH SMITH ON DIVERSITY AMONG THE SAINTS

By Van Hale

THE QUESTION WAS ASKED AND MAY STILL BE contemplated, as Joseph Smith put it: “Why is it this babbler gains so many followers, and retains them?” His answer was, “Because I possess the principle of love. All I can offer the world is a good heart and a good hand.”¹ As I delve into the mind of Joseph Smith, I see another possible answer.

Joseph Smith boldly announced the re-opening of the heavens. He proclaimed the dawning of a new dispensation and with it a veritable cloudburst of revelation. No longer need humankind look only to the past for revelation, for much withheld from the ancient prophets was now to be revealed in the last days—in fact, revealed not only to prophets but to “babes and sucklings.” This deluge of knowledge was not just for the prophet Joseph Smith, but for all Saints.² Available to even the least of the Saints, when they were prepared, was that which no eye had seen, no ear had heard, nor had ever entered into the heart of man. Line upon line; in bits and pieces; here and there a little was the process by which the Saints would progress in gospel maturity.

Awaiting those Saints who prepared themselves was a prophet *longing* to feed them a feast of new ideas, new revelation, and mysteries: deep mysteries, mysteries which would be revealed to some but not to others. In addition to revealed truth, Smith’s followers were to aggressively pursue a universal



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search for truth, “let it come from whence it may,”³ in order to come out true Mormons. A little confidence in, or even a hope for, such an exciting prospect could have been nothing less than exhilarating to many.

The 15 March 1844 *Times and Seasons* reported that for several Sundays at the temple grounds, the Saints had been favored with “very interesting and eloquent discourses” from Joseph Smith. The report states that Joseph frequently declared that the “many glorious principles of the kingdom of God, which he is anxious to make known to the saints, is a burden upon his mind.” His audience is described as listening with an almost breathless silence; their minds apparently being completely absorbed with the subject, while with a rapturous delight they heard so exquisite a dissertation upon these important principles, which are connected to the great plan of salvation.

I suggest that one reason “this babbler gain[ed] so many followers and retain[ed] them” is this exciting prospect of receiving new gospel concepts from the prophet, as well as from one’s own study and personal revelations. The heavens were potentially open to every Saint.

One natural consequence of Joseph Smith’s progressive approach is that the Saints would be at various levels of gospel maturity and diverse in their personal beliefs. I contend that this diversity is a situation which Joseph promoted and defended.

What follows is a gathering of sources demonstrating that this new age of enlightenment, with expected and acceptable diversity, was a basic theme permeating the teachings of Joseph Smith from the beginning of his public ministry in 1829 through his death in 1844.

dispensations; also other things that have not been before revealed.⁴

Those things which never have been revealed from the foundation of the world, but have been kept hid from the wise and prudent, shall be revealed unto babes and sucklings in this, the dispensation of the fulness of times. (D&C 128:18)

I deign to reveal unto my church things which have been kept hid from before the foundation of the world, things that pertain to the dispensation of the fulness of times. (D&C 124:41)

That which hath been hid from before the foundation of the world is revealed to babes and sucklings in the last days.⁵

God hath not revealed anything to Joseph, but what He will make known unto the Twelve, and even the least Saint may know all things as fast as he is able to bear them.⁶

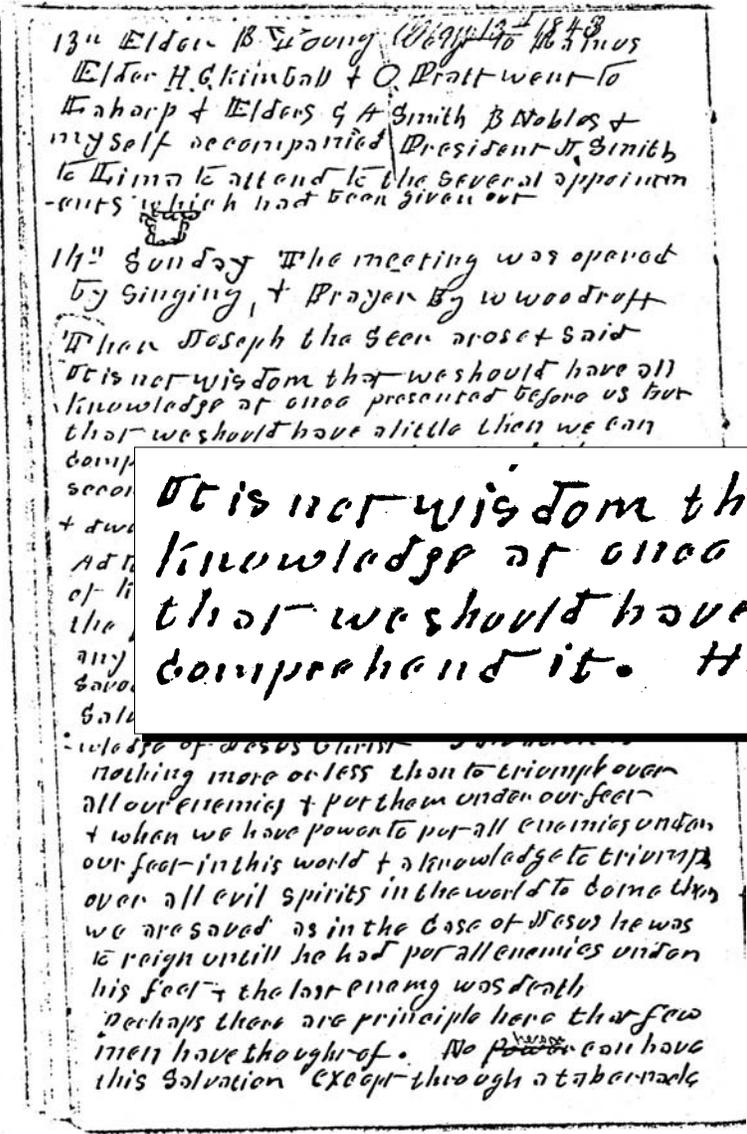
In an 1842 council of the patriarch, bishops, apostles, and other leaders, Joseph reported that

[T]he communications I made to this council were of things spiritual, and to be received only by the spiritual minded: and there was nothing made known to these men but what will be made known to all the Saints of the last days, so soon as they are prepared to receive, and a proper place is prepared to communicate them, even to the weakest of the Saints. . . .⁷

To Joseph Smith, the ultimate potential for a Saint was virtually boundless:

The day shall come when you shall comprehend even God. (D&C 88:49)

[Melchizedek priesthood holders] . . . have the privilege of receiving the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, to have the heavens opened unto them, to commune with the general assembly and church of the Firstborn, and to enjoy the communion and pres-



FROM A 14 MAY 1843 JOSEPH SMITH SERMON
This is a scan of a page from Wilford Woodruff's journal.

A CLOUDBURST OF NEW REVELATION

JOSEPH ANNOUNCED A final dispensation in which secrets, mysteries, and even things withheld from former prophets would potentially be available to all Saints.

Hear, O ye heavens, and give ear, O earth, and rejoice ye inhabitants thereof. . . . For thus saith the Lord . . . those who serve me in righteousness . . . to them will I reveal all mysteries, yea, all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom from days of old, and for ages to come. (D&C 76:1-7)

The dispensation of the fullness of times will bring to light the things that have been revealed in all former

ence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant. (D&C 107:19)

The Lord will teach him face to face, and he may have a perfect knowledge of the mysteries of the Kingdom of God.⁸

GROWING IN GRACE AND KNOWLEDGE

JOSEPH TAUGHT THAT all Saints are but children and must expect to progress like children. Of course this meant that in the growth process, the Saints would be at vastly different levels of gospel advancement, with considerable divergence in their personal beliefs.

Ye are little children and ye cannot bear all things now; ye must grow in grace and in the knowledge of the truth. (D&C 50:40)

Ye cannot bear all things now; nevertheless, be of good cheer, for I will lead you along. (D&C 78:18)

The Lord deals with this people as a tender parent with a child, communicating light and intelligence and the knowledge of his ways as they can bear it.⁹

It is not wisdom that we should have all knowledge at once presented before us; but that we should have a little at a time; then we can comprehend it.¹⁰

When you climb up a ladder, you must begin at the bottom, and ascend step by step, until you arrive at the top; and so it is with the principles of the Gospel—you must begin with the first, and go on until you learn all the principles of exaltation.¹¹

THE MYSTERIES

JOSEPH SMITH'S TEACHING on the mysteries is a topic worthy of its own study. Mysteries fall into several categories: those that can be written and those that cannot; those that have been revealed to some and those that have never been revealed; those hidden in the scriptures (D&C 71:1) and those that can be received only by revelation.

While the Saints were to learn from the scriptures, from Joseph Smith, and from one another, they were encouraged, even commanded, to go beyond these sources and to personally delve into mysteries. Gospel maturity is largely a personal enterprise—so personal that the Saints are potentially privy to restricted mysteries which they are not at liberty to divulge, those which could neither be written nor spoken.

It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the chil-

dren of men. . . .

He that will not harden his heart . . . is given . . . to know the mysteries of God until he know them in full. . . .

They that will harden their hearts, to them is given the lesser portion of the word until they know nothing concerning his mysteries. (Alma 12:9–11; see also Alma 40:3; 1 Nephi 10:19; Jacob 4:8)

He that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God; yea, unto such it shall be given to reveal things which never have been revealed. (Alma 26:22)

If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries . . . for unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom, but unto the world it is not given to know them. (D&C 42:61, 65)

The vision of the degrees of glory received by Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon in 1832 included some mysteries which were not to be written or spoken. They are only to be made known to Saints individually and personally:

The mysteries of his kingdom which he showed unto us . . . he commanded us we should not write . . . and are not lawful for man to utter;

Neither is man capable to make them known, for they are only to be seen and understood by the power of the Holy Spirit, which God bestows on those who love him, and purify themselves before him;

To whom he grants this privilege of seeing and knowing for themselves. (D&C 76:114–117)

Unto him that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in him a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life. (D&C 63:23; see also D&C 76:1–9)

I reveal . . . all the hidden mysteries of my kingdom . . . those things which eye has not seen, nor ear heard, nor yet entered into the heart of man. (D&C 76:7–10; see also D&C 109:7, 14)

THE PURSUIT OF TRUTH

IN ADDITION TO the enterprise of gathering truth from revelation—past, new, and personal—Joseph directed the Saints to employ the natural principle of study to glean from a vast body of truth abroad in the world.

I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom.

Teach ye diligently . . . in theory, in principle, in

doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand. . . . Seek ye diligently and teach one another words of wisdom; yea, seek ye out of the best books words of wisdom; seek learning, even by study and also by faith. (D&C 88:77, 78, 118)

Study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people. (D&C 90:15)

Where is the man who is authorized to put his finger on the spot and say, thus far thou shalt go and no farther: there is no man. Therefore let us receive the whole, or none.¹²

Many seal up the door of heaven by saying so far God may reveal and I will believe but no further.¹³

I advise all to go on to perfection, and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Godliness.¹⁴

Clearly, even with the great potential for spiritual growth announced frequently by Joseph Smith and found in several LDS scriptural passages, the most faithful and aggressive LDS student will yet leave this life far short of a full understanding of the mysteries.

But it will be a great while after you have passed through the veil before you will have learned them. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave.¹⁵

An 1833 revelation speaks of an outpouring of advanced knowledge at the coming of the Lord, unknowable before that event:

In that day when the Lord shall come, he shall reveal all things—

Things which have passed, and hidden things which no man knew, things of the earth, by which it was made, and the purpose and the end thereof—

Things most precious, things that are above, and things that are beneath, things that are in the earth, and upon the earth, and in heaven. (D&C 101:32–34)¹⁶

One of the grand fundamental principles of “Mormonism” is to receive truth, let it come from whence it may.¹⁷

Have the Presbyterians any truth? Yes. Have the Baptists, Methodists, etc., any truth? Yes. They all have a little truth mixed with error. We should gather

all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up, or we shall not come out true “Mormons.”¹⁸

In 1839, Joseph Smith wrote from Liberty Jail to Isaac Galland, a non-Mormon:

[I] am liberal in my sentiments towards all men, in matters of opinion, and rights of conscience. . . .

Mormonism is truth; and every man who embraced it felt himself at liberty to embrace every truth: consequently the shackles of superstition, bigotry, ignorance, and priestcraft, falls at once from his neck; and his eyes are opened to see the truth, and truth greatly prevails over priestcraft.¹⁹

DIFFERENCES OF OPINION AND THE NATURE OF CREEDS

JOSEPH CONDEMNED THE idea of an established creed because it stifles deeper thought and bars further revelation. To him, being a true Mormon means opening up to a diverse array of thought, not narrowing down to an established list of mandatory doctrine.

I have the most liberal sentiments, and feelings of charity towards all sects, parties, and denominations; and the rights and liberties of conscience [sic], I hold most sacred and dear, and dispise [sic] no man for differing with me in matters of opinion.²⁰

I never feel to force my doctrine upon any person; I rejoice to see prejudice give way to truth, and the traditions of men dispersed by the pure principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.²¹

In relation to the power over the minds of mankind which I hold, I would say, It is in consequence of the power of truth in the doctrines which I have been an instrument in the hands of God of presenting unto them, and not because of any compulsion on my part. . . . I ask, Did I ever exercise any compulsion over any man? Did I not give him the liberty of disbelieving any doctrine I have preached, if he saw fit?²²

While Joseph’s body was locked in Liberty Jail for five months, his mind soared. He wrote from the confines of jail in 1839:

Mormonism is truth, in other words the doctrine of the Latter Day Saints, is truth. . . . The first and fundamental principle of our holy religion is, that we believe that we have a right to embrace all, and every item of truth, without limitation or without being circumscribed or prohibited by the creeds or superstitious notions of men, or by the dominations of one another.²³

In 1842, referring to his attorney Justin Butterfield, Joseph Smith said:

I told him I had no creed to circumscribe my mind.²⁴

The next day, in response to a question by Butterfield, he expanded this thought:

The most prominent difference in sentiment between the Latter-day Saints and sectarians was, that the latter were all circumscribed by some peculiar creed, which deprived its members the privilege of believing anything not contained therein, whereas the Latter-day Saints have no creed, but are ready to believe all true principles that exist, as they are made manifest from time to time.²⁵

UNITY AND DIVERSITY

JOSEPH SMITH'S POSITION concerning unity among the Saints was clear. He found the notion of unity of belief, established by creeds, offensive because that stifles the learning process he had announced and promoted. Individual Saints were to amalgamate bits and pieces of truth from a variety of heavenly and earthly sources. The inescapable consequence of this process is diversity of belief among the Saints.

The Pelatiah Brown incident is well known. Brown "was hauled up for trial before the High Council" because of some of his teachings. While Joseph Smith did not agree with Brown's scriptural interpretations—in fact, he said he "could not help laughing" at Brown's views—nonetheless he

did not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodist, and not like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine.

The High Council undertook to censure and correct Elder Brown, because of his teachings in relation to the beasts. Whether they actually corrected him or not, I am a little doubtful, but don't care.

I want to come up into the presence of God, and learn all things; but the creeds set up stakes, and say, "Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;" which I cannot subscribe to.²⁶

CONTENTION AND DIVISION

ONE HAZARD OF free thought which Joseph encountered was contention or division. This he denounced. In the same discussion of the Pelatiah Brown incident, he continued:

It is not very essential for the elders to have knowledge in relation to the meaning of beasts, and heads and horns, and other figures made use of in the revelations; still, it may be necessary, to prevent contention and division and do away with suspense. If we get puffed up by thinking that we have much knowledge, we are apt to get a contentious spirit, and correct knowledge is necessary to cast out that spirit.

The evil of being puffed up with correct (though useless) knowledge is not so great as the evil of contention.

Joseph went on to instruct Brown and the elders to "let the mysteries alone" when preaching, and to confine themselves, per the Lord's instruction, to repentance and baptism.²⁷

Strive not about the mysteries of the kingdom.²⁸

It is no use living among hogs without a snout. This biting and devouring each other I cannot endure. Away with it. For God's sake, stop it.²⁹

In Third Nephi, Jesus commands the Nephites:

There shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been . . . concerning the points of my doctrine. . . . He that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another. Behold this is not my doctrine, to stir up the hearts of men with anger. . . . (3 Nephi 11: 28–30)

Jesus then goes on to list the principles that alone are his doctrine. I suggest that this is the closest thing to an early Mormon creed. It limits doctrine, perhaps mandatory doctrine, to faith in Jesus, repentance, baptism, the visit of the Holy Ghost, the testimony of Jesus revealed by the Father, and the unity of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Further, Jesus speaks against those who "shall declare more or less than this, and establish it for my doctrine" (3 Nephi 11:40).

This passage does not condemn the declaration "of more or less than this," only the establishment of it "for my doctrine." From this narrow definition, all other ideas, concepts, and revealed mysteries are outside of the parameter of the doctrine of Jesus—that is, mandatory doctrine. This is not to say that this doctrine is all the Saints should consider. Remember Joseph's 1844 advice, strongly supported in Mormon scripture, "I advise all to go on to perfection, and search deeper and deeper into the mysteries of Godliness."³⁰ I suggest that from Joseph's point of view, the numerous ideas, concepts, and teachings of the Saints that go beyond what Jesus to the Nephites called "my doctrine" fall into the category of Mormon thought, and are open to various degrees of speculation, expansion, evolution, and revision. But conclusions drawn from these searchings and ponderings, regardless of how strongly supported or

Q. Where are the revelations to be found which give this relation of the attributes of God?

A. In the Old and New Testaments, and they are quoted in the fourth lecture, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and tenth paragraphs.*

Q. Is the idea of the existence of those attributes, in the Deity, necessary in order to enable any rational being to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation?

A. It is.

Q. How do you prove it?

A. By the eleventh, twelfth, thirteenth, fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth paragraphs in this lecture.*

Q. Does the idea of the existence of these attributes in the Deity, as far as his attributes are concerned, enable a rational being to exercise faith in him unto life and salvation?

A. It does.

Q. How do you prove it?

A. By the seventeenth and eighteenth paragraphs.*

Q. Have the Latter Day Saints as much authority given them, through the revelation of the attributes of God, to exercise faith in him as the Former Day Saints had?

A. They have.

Q. How do you prove it?

A. By the nineteenth paragraph of this lecture.*

Note. Let the student turn and commit those paragraphs to memory.

LECTURE FIFTH.

Of Faith.

SECTION V.

1 In our former lectures we treated of the being, character, perfections and attributes of God. What we mean by perfections, is, the perfections which belong to all the attributes of his nature. We shall, in this lecture speak of the Godhead: we mean the Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

2 There are two personages who constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over

all things—by whom all things were created and made, that are created and made, whether visible or invisible: whether in heaven, on earth, or in the earth, under the earth, or throughout the immensity of space—They are the Father and the Son: The Father being a personage of spirit, glory and power: possessing all perfection and fulness: The Son, who was in the bosom of the Father, a personage of tabernacle, made, or fashioned like unto man, or being in the form and likeness of man, or, rather, man was formed after his likeness, and in his image;—he is also the express image and likeness of the personage of the Father: possessing all the fulness of the Father, or, the same fulness with the Father; being begotten of him, and was ordained from before the foundation of the world to be a propitiation for the sins of all those who should believe on his name, and is called the Son because of the flesh—and descended in suffering below that which man can suffer, or, in other words, suffered greater sufferings, and was exposed to more powerful contradictions than any man can be. But notwithstanding all this, he kept the law of God, and remained without sin: Showing thereby that it is in the power of man to keep the law and remain also without sin. And also, that by him a righteous judgment might come upon all flesh, and that all who walk not in the law of God, may justly be condemned by the law, and have no excuse for their sins. And he being the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth, and having overcome, received a fulness of the glory of the Father—possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit, that bears record of the Father and the Son, and these three are one, or in other words, these three constitute the great, matchless, governing and supreme power over all things: by whom all things were created and made, that were created and made: and these three

THE OPENING PAGES OF "LECTURE FIFTH" FROM THE LECTURES ON FAITH

These are scans from the 1835 edition of the D&C.

how firmly established, nonetheless fall short of mandatory doctrine.

Harkening back to Jesus's command that "there shall be no disputations among you," it seems "doctrine" is very limited and refers to what is universally believed. The rest is not doctrine. If the Saints realized that where they may differ is on topics that are not doctrine; that the ideas of any or all of them may be infected with some degree of insufficient knowledge, immature enlightenment, uncertainty, theory, speculation, and perhaps even error; this would have a humbling effect, inconsistent with the dogmatism and fanaticism which foster contentious disputation. Given this ideal, differences would exist; disputations would not. Thoughtful Saints could exclaim with Joseph, "It feels so good not to be trammelled."

TEACHING AND PREPARING TO RECEIVE NEW TRUTHS

JOSEPH EXPRESSED A great desire to teach new ideas. He longed to tell that which he felt restrained to divulge. I cannot help but sense his excitement at the opportunity to lift the curtain a little, allowing the Saints a peek at a whole new stage of religious thought.

It is my meditation all the day, and more than my meat and drink, to know how I shall make the Saints of God comprehend the visions that roll like an overflowing surge before my mind.

Oh! how I would delight to bring before you things which you never thought of!³¹

I want to go back to the beginning, and so lift your minds into a more lofty sphere and a more exalted understanding than what the human mind generally aspires to.³²

It has always been my province to dig up hidden mysteries—new things—for my hearers.³³

Would to God that I had forty days and nights in which to tell you all!³⁴

Joseph lamented the restraint he felt because of the strength of tradition. While many Saints relished the prospect of new ideas, he observed that it was difficult for others to open their minds to concepts incompatible with their traditions.

It is very difficult for us to communicate to the churches all that God has revealed to us, in consequence of tradition; for we are differently situated from any other people that ever existed upon this earth; consequently those former revelations cannot be suited to our conditions; they were given to other people, who were before us.³⁵

There are a great many wise men and women too in our midst who are too wise to be taught; therefore they must die in their ignorance, and in the resurrection they will find their mistake. Many seal up the door of heaven by saying, So far God may reveal and I will believe.³⁶

At an 1841 meeting that included such Saints as Heber C. Kimball and Wilford Woodruff, Joseph declared that there were truths held in reserve which even the three of them were not prepared to receive.

Some say Joseph is a fallen Prophet because he does not bring forth more of the word of the Lord,” “Why does he not?” Are we able to receive it? No . . . not one in this room.³⁷

He commented further in 1843 and 1844:

I shall take the broad ground, then . . . we have received a portion of knowledge from God by immediate revelation, and from the same source we can receive all knowledge. . . .

The Saints are slow to understand. I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all.³⁸

I suppose I am not allowed to go into an investigation of anything that is not contained in the Bible. If I do, I think there are so many over-wise men here, that they would cry “treason” and put me to death. So I will go to the old Bible and turn commentator today.³⁹

Many men will say, “I will never forsake you, but will stand by you at all times.” But the moment you teach them some of the mysteries of the kingdom of God that are retained in the heavens and are to be revealed to the children of men when they are prepared for them they will be the first to stone you and put you to death.⁴⁰

TOLERATING A RANGE OF DOCTRINAL VIEWS: AN EXAMPLE

Joseph Smith’s teachings about the Holy Ghost

JOSEPH SMITH UNDERSTOOD that some devoted Saints who had escaped the bondage of tradition and imbibed some of the mysteries would be doctrinally at odds with other devoted Saints who had not—and at odds not just in some small detail. Joseph knew that extreme new concepts provoke extreme shock. To Joseph, the Mormon experience is progressive, with Saints at various levels of gospel maturity and a diversity of belief. Instead of condemning this, he defended it.

Joseph’s concern with doctrinal differences focused primarily on the contention and division at times fostered by difference of opinion. He described LDS belief only in a basic and general way. It is difficult to find concepts which he declared to be mandatory.⁴¹ On doctrinal belief, he kept the doors wide open to change and development.

As an example of Joseph’s own comfort with a range of doctrinal speculation, what follows is an extensive examination of three concepts of God—two diametrically opposed—that Joseph endorsed during the Nauvoo period.

The Lectures on Faith are a series of seven lessons that were taught to the elders at the School of the Prophets at Kirtland in 1834.⁴² Lecture Five is of specific interest here. It was published in the Church’s *Messenger and Advocate* in 1835 with the note that it would soon be published in a collection of “important revelations on doctrine and church government” to provide “a perfect understanding of the doctrine believed by this society.”⁴³ The reference was to the soon-to-be-published 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants approved by a general assembly of the Church at Kirtland in 1835.⁴⁴

The Father and the Son

In Lecture Five, the physical nature of God the Father is contrasted with that of the Son:

The Father being a personage of spirit. . . . The Son . . . a personage of tabernacle . . . being in the form and

likeness of man . . . [and] the express image and likeness of the personage of the Father . . . the Son because of the flesh . . .⁴⁵

Here the term “personage” equals organized form, while “tabernacle” equals flesh and bone. Both the Father and the Son have organized form, but only the Son has tabernacle, that is, flesh and bone.

In an 1840 pamphlet responding to an anti-Mormon tract by William Hewitt, Parley P. Pratt restated this view of the Father as a personage of spirit and the Son a personage of tabernacle:

The Son has flesh and bones, and . . . the Father is a spirit . . . a personage of Spirit has its organized formation, its body and parts, its individual identity, its eyes, mouth, ears, &c., and that it is in the image or likeness of the temporal body, although not composed of such gross materials as flesh and bones; hence it is said that Jesus is “the express image of his (the father’s) person.”

Pratt declared that this was the Church’s belief as found by “whoever reads our books, or hears us preach.”⁴⁶

Holy Spirit

Later in Lecture Five, the Holy Spirit is contrasted with the Father and the Son who are personages, while the Holy Spirit is not. Rather, the Holy Spirit is the mind of the Father and the Son. The Son is presented as

the only begotten of the Father . . . possessing the same mind with the Father, which mind is the Holy Spirit.⁴⁷

For greater precision, a catechism was appended to the Lecture:

Q. How many personages are there in the Godhead?

A. Two: the Father and the Son.

Q. Do the Father and the Son possess the same mind?

A. They do...

Q. What is this mind?

A. The Holy Spirit. . . .⁴⁸

To summarize: in Lecture Five, the Holy Spirit is not a personage but the mind of the Father and Son, who, in contrast, are personages: the Father, a personage of spirit—no flesh and bones; the Son, a resurrected personage of tabernacle—a personage with flesh and bone.

Joseph’s Nauvoo Teachings on the Father and the Holy Spirit

As early as 1841, Joseph Smith was teaching a different view than that articulated in the 1834 Lecture Five. He began

teaching that Jesus did that which his Father had done before him—that is, experience mortality, including death and resurrection—and that he is now a resurrected personage of tabernacle (i.e., flesh and bone). Joseph taught further that the Holy Spirit is indeed a personage, having organized form, but no flesh and bone, who will yet have the same opportunity as the Father and the Son to receive a body of flesh and bone.

There is no other God in heaven but that God who has flesh and bones John 5-26 “As the father hath life in himself, even so hath he given the son to have life in himself”. God the father took life unto himself precisely as Jesus did.⁴⁹

The Son Had a tabernacle [sic] & so had the father But the Holly [sic] Ghost is a personage of spirit without tabernacle [sic].⁵⁰

Peter and Stephen testify that they saw the Son of Man standing on the right hand of God. Any person that had seen the heavens opened knows that there are three personages in the heavens who hold the keys of power, and one presides over all. . . . As the Father hath power in Himself, so hath the Son power in Himself, to lay down His life and take it again, so He has a body of His own. The Son doeth what He hath seen the Father do: then the Father hath some day laid down His life and taken it again; so He has a body of His own; each one will be in His own body.⁵¹

Eleven sources preserve Joseph’s Nauvoo teaching that the Father is a personage of tabernacle, resurrected with a body of flesh and bones, the same as that of Jesus,⁵² and nine sources that the Holy Ghost is a personage, but a personage of spirit, not of tabernacle, i.e., not having flesh and bones.⁵³

Two reports record Joseph Smith’s teaching

that the Holy Ghost is now in a state of Probation which if he should perform in righteousness he may pass through the same or similar course of things that the Son has.⁵⁴

The following summary of the Nauvoo teachings of Joseph Smith is found in an 1843 sermon which was added to the Doctrine and Covenants (D&C 130:22)—not the 1844 edition, which he supervised, but the 1876 edition supervised by Orson Pratt under the counsel of Brigham Young:

The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man’s; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit.⁵⁵

Discussion

What happened to the Lecture Five doctrine? Did Joseph Smith replace it with the Nauvoo teachings? What was Joseph Smith’s belief at his death in 1844?

In an attempt to answer these questions, we must consider the publication of the second edition of the Doctrine and Covenants in 1844. Parley P. Pratt had requested permission to publish the second edition in New York but was informed in a letter by Hyrum Smith from Nauvoo:

I cannot give any encouragements for the publication of the same other than at this place, or, where it can come out under the immediate inspection of Joseph and his councillors, [sic] So, that no one may be chargeable with any mistakes that may occur.⁵⁶

Joseph Smith personally supervised the publication of this second edition of the Doctrine and Covenants,⁵⁷ the printing of which was almost completed at his death in June 1844.⁵⁸ This was not simply a reprint of the 1835 edition. Joseph Smith added seven new sections and deleted the minutes of the conference which authorized the preparation and publication of the 1835 edition.⁵⁹

Given this personal attention to the production, Joseph's inclusion of Lecture Five in the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants without any alteration seems highly significant. In doing this, the Lecture Five doctrine of the Father as a spirit, and the Holy Ghost, not as a personage, but as the mind of the Father and the Son, received continued endorsement. I have found no instance where Joseph taught this Lecture Five doctrine during the Nauvoo period. In fact, all his teaching on these points ran contrary to the Lecture Five doctrine. Yet, he included Lecture Five, unchanged, in the new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. This would seem to imply his endorsement of Lecture Five as an acceptable position for mainstream Mormons.

In short, Joseph had been teaching concepts contrary to Lecture Five for at least four years. He could have altered Lecture Five to conform to his Nauvoo teaching, or he could simply have deleted it from the new edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. But instead, he included it without modification. Further, he could have included his new Nauvoo teachings of the Godhead in the new Doctrine and Covenants; but, in fact, none of the new sections presents his Nauvoo concepts. From these facts, it is clear that Joseph endorsed the printing of Lecture Five as doctrine for distribution among the Saints, although I suspect he no longer believed the Lecture Five doctrine, if he ever did. While on a number of occasions at Nauvoo, he had taught his new ideas of God discussed above, none appeared in print prior to 1844.

Interestingly, Joseph also presented a third view of God in a letter written for publication. I refer to the Wentworth letter, written and published in 1842. After a brief sketch of Mormon history, the letter concludes with thirteen statements of Mormon belief—the Articles of Faith. The first Article of Faith reads: “We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.” This was the only statement of LDS belief on the Godhead included in the letter. Whatever additional ideas the Saints may have entertained on this subject, it is likely that all would have subscribed to this

THE HOLY GHOST IS A PERSON: EVOLUTION OF JOSEPH SMITH'S TEACHINGS 1841–1844

1841 Everlasting covenant was made between three personages before the organization of this earth, and relates to their dispensation of things to men on the earth; these personages, according to Abraham's record, are called God the first, the Creator; God the second, the Redeemer; and God the third, the witness or Testator. *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 190.

1841 Joseph said Concerning the Godhead it was Not as many imagined—three Heads & but one body, he said the three were separate bodys—God the first & Jesus the Mediator the 2d & the Holy Ghost & these three agree in one. . . (William McIntire Minute Book). *Words of Joseph Smith*, 63.

1841 . . . the Son Had a tabernacle & so had the father But the Holly Ghost is a personage of spirit without tabernacle. . . (McIntire). *Words*, 64.

1842 We believe in three Gods. There are three personages in Heaven—all equal in equal in power and glory, but they are not one God (from a non-Mormon interview with Joseph Smith). *Times & Seasons* 3:926.

1843 The Holy Ghost is a personage, and is in the form of a personage. *Teachings*, 276; *Words*, 160.

1843 The Father has a body of flesh and bones as tangible as man's; the Son also; but the Holy Ghost has not a body of flesh and bones, but is a personage of Spirit. D&C 130:22; *Words*, 170, 173.

1843 Joseph also said that the Holy Ghost is now in a state of Probation which if he should perform in righteousness he may pass through the same or a similar course of things that the Son has (Franklin D. Richards' notebook). *Words*, 245.

1843 Any person that had seen the heavens opened knows that there are three personages in the heavens who hold the keys of power, and one presides over all. *Teachings*, 312; *Words*, 212, 214.

1844 . . . the holy ghost is yet a Spiritual body and waiting to take to himself a body as the Savior did or as god did or the gods before them took bodies. . . (George Laub diary). *Words*, 382.

1844 I have always declared God to be a distinct personage, Jesus Christ a separate and distinct personage from God the Father, and that the Holy Ghost was a distinct personage and a Spirit; and these three constitute three distinct personages and three Gods. *Teachings*, 370; *Words*, 378.

statement. In fact, it was universal Mormon doctrine. It does not address any of the hotly debated issues of historic Christianity found in the trinitarian controversies. In fact, all of the Christian factions would have subscribed to this statement. Beyond belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, this statement is silent.

Yet the view that the Father, like the Son, had experienced mortality and that both have resurrected physical bodies; that the Holy Ghost is a personage of spirit destined to live in mortality; that there is a plurality of Gods; and that the Father has a Father are all ideas which had been taught by Joseph by this time.⁶⁰ The statement of belief in the first Article of Faith does not settle any questions raised by the contrast between Lecture Five and Joseph's Nauvoo teachings on the nature of the Father and of the Holy Ghost. Beyond belief in the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, the door is left open to considerable divergence.⁶¹

The 15 September 1842 issue of the *Times and Seasons*, edited by Joseph Smith, included an article from another paper—an account by a clergyman of his visit to Nauvoo. He reported the following from a conversation with Joseph:

He [Joseph] next asked me—

What is the fundamental doctrine of your faith? “The unity of God—one God in one person.” “We don't agree with you. We believe in three Gods. There are three personages in Heaven—all equal in power and glory, but they are not one God.”

Joseph responded to the clergyman's account with an editorial comment:

Tolerably fair: . . . no odds whether there be two, three, or “Gods many.” The Father, and the Son are persons of Tabernacle; and the Holy Ghost a spirit, besides the sons of God: for the scriptures say: “Ye are Gods.”

According to the clergyman's report, Joseph rejected the idea of one God and expressed belief in three Gods, but Joseph's editorial comment falls short of being dogmatic. He seems amenable to three options: “two, three, or ‘Gods many,’” rejecting only the belief in one God. Belief in two Gods seems to be the logical conclusion to draw from Lecture Five. In one of Joseph's 1839 Liberty Jail letters, dictated by him to be circulated among the Saints, he advocated, or at least suggested, the existence of many Gods (D&C 121:28, 32). However, when this letter was first published in the *Times and Seasons*, the concept of a plurality and hierarchy of Gods found in these two verses was deleted.⁶² Those Saints privy to the letter were exposed to Joseph's belief in a plurality of gods, while those reading the letter in the *Times and Seasons*, published for the general Church membership, were not. Two different views derive from the two renderings of the letter. So here again we see Joseph's expectation and toleration, and even responsibility, for diversity among the Saints, even upon a subject of considerable significance to him.

Joseph's final conference address is highly significant in understanding his views of the Godhead at the time of his death. Unlike many other times, Joseph prepared for this sermon.⁶³ A large open area adjacent to the temple was readied in anticipa-

tion of the largest congregation of Saints yet assembled. The address has come to be known as his King Follett Discourse. Two competent reporters, Thomas Bullock and William Clayton, received a special assignment to record full minutes of the conference. These were to be amalgamated and published in the *Times and Seasons* so that Joseph's views on God could be widely distributed among the Saints.⁶⁴

The King Follett Discourse is Joseph's most extensive declaration of his views of God. In his remarks, he contends that concerning the character of God, the great majority of mankind “know but little above the brute beast.” For Joseph, this was intolerable, for “it is the first principle of the Gospel to know for a certainty the Character of God.” He continues, admonishing the Saints that “from this time henceforth” the question, “What kind of a being is God?” should “occupy [their] attention.” He even declares a true understanding of God's nature to be a prerequisite of exaltation.⁶⁵ The views he proceeded to present include:

- How God came to be God
- That God was once a man
- God lived, died, was resurrected and has a physical body, like Jesus
- The plurality of Gods and plurality of worlds
- The grand council of the Gods
- The Saints must learn how to become Gods
- God's glory increases as his children become Gods
- There is a hierarchy of Gods
- God did not create the world out of nothing
- God has always existed, and so has the spirit of man.

Two significant points in Joseph's theology are missing in this discourse: that the Holy Ghost is a personage, and that God the Father has a Father. In his last address to the Saints, 16 June 1844, Joseph again took up the subject of the King Follett Discourse and included these two points.⁶⁶

The King Follett Discourse was Joseph's best reported address. Immediately following the conference, under the supervision of the Twelve, Thomas Bullock amalgamated his and Clayton's reports of the conference for inclusion in the *Times and Seasons*. Publication of the conference minutes was serialized beginning in the 1 May 1844 issue. Joseph's King Follett Discourse first appeared in print in the 15 August issue, about the same time that the production of the 1844 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, which included Lecture Five and its radically divergent doctrine, was completed. Thus we see that at Nauvoo, Joseph endorsed for publication three views of God, two of which, on several points, were diametrically opposed.

ALTHOUGH JOSEPH SMITH spoke at length on his views of God in the King Follett Discourse, he by no means considered his remarks comprehensive, but rather a morsel, a mere appetizer for the feast which awaited those who admitted their ignorance, discarded their certainty, and focused on the remarkable 1832 promise that “the day shall come when you shall comprehend even God” (D&C 88:49):

Had I inspiration, revelation, and lungs to communicate what my soul has contemplated in times past, there is not a soul in this congregation but would go to their homes and shut their mouths in everlasting silence on religion till they had learned something. Why be so certain that you comprehend the things of God, when all things with you are so uncertain.⁶⁷

From this perspective, the spiritual knowledge of the Saints is superficial and unable to sustain the level of certainty required for dogmatism or fanaticism that might foster contention and division. The result for those who grasped this would be significant diversity but without contention.

While Joseph was deeply committed to unify the Saints in their basic beliefs and cooperative efforts to build the kingdom of God, he frequently, as we have seen, explained, endorsed, defended, and expected considerable, even startling, diversity in the realm of what may appropriately be termed doctrinal speculations; but he condemned those who turned diversity into contention or division within the Church. He was the champion of both unity and diversity. In his vision, individuals widely divergent in religious maturity would unite in the common cause of the Restoration.

Joseph proclaimed the dawning of the last dispensation, and with it, an enticing opportunity faced every Saint. The old scriptures were available for each Saint to study and glean truth. Much withheld anciently was to be revealed to the prophets and the Saints in the last dispensation. Thus the knowledge of even the least Saint would soon exceed that of the ancient prophets. Also, the ancient scriptures were now open to new interpretation and expansion.

Joseph encouraged each member to seek the personal revelation promised to all Saints. In addition, there were many gems of truth abroad in the world awaiting the Saints' discovery. And the Saints themselves were to be a resource for each other. They were to share with each other, when appropriate, their views and newly discovered truths. Given this milieu, each Saint was free, perhaps even obligated, to amalgamate truth captured from all these sources into his own personal brand of Mormonism.

In Joseph's vision of the Mormon mainstream, if they were to grow, the Saints would need great freedom of belief, very little mandatory doctrine, and no creeds. He left doors wide open for reevaluation, reinterpretation, development, and evolution in LDS belief, both personal and institutional, in most, if not all, areas. He considered the Church a work in progress, as also the beliefs of its members. To him, the ideal church is a body of independent, freethinking individuals, zealous in their pursuit of truth, who, while diverse in their doctrinal conclusions, simultaneously recognize their deficiencies and work together in a strong bond to promote the cause of the Restoration. Joseph saw that the greatest strength in the Church—in fact the ideal ultimate authority—would be a body of strong, faithful, yet independent Mormons coming to consensus on a matter. By comparison, the consensus of a body consisting of nonthinking, blind followers has nominal value.

A PERSONAL JOURNEY

Serving and thinking within the Kingdom

LET ME CONCLUDE on a personal note. I am exhilarated by the prospects of freely gathering truth and seeking mysteries from whatever source, as urged by Joseph throughout his ministry. As a young missionary in California in 1964, deeply interested in Joseph's doctrinal teachings, I purchased *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* and studied it throughout my mission. I was particularly inspired by those numerous instances where he advocated a bold, open-minded search for truth from a wide range of sources, with the expectation of uncovering mysteries, perhaps even mysteries unknown to any other Saint. With this sense of personal freedom in all my inquiry, and my expectation of Joseph's enthusiastic endorsement, I have never felt required to believe anything which runs contrary to the results of my investigations.

Upon returning from my mission, I intensified and diversified my study. History became my new passion, specifically Judeo-Christian and Mormon history, particularly regarding the development of beliefs and doctrines. I also pursued biblical studies, a passion first awakened during my mission, and I soon discovered that by far the best research in this field is being done by non-LDS scholars. I also found that the value of modern Bible translations far exceeds that of the King James Version. Non-Mormon biblical, historical, and theological studies are often viewed with suspicion by Mormons and are thus neglected or avoided. Due to my encounter with Joseph's teachings, I have felt no hesitation to seek truth from the fine research of Catholic, Protestant, Jewish, and secular scholars, and I have delighted in the study and comparison of thirty-five Bible translations I have collected. Further, I have incorporated much from these sources into my Mormonism.

In junior high and high school, I hated history. Science was my passion. I built a laboratory, and when I was twelve, I wrote a book of my findings and experiments entitled, *Van Hale Boy Chemist*. It has not been published—yet. I intended to become a scientist. I studied several disciplines and was awestruck by the results of scientists applying the scientific method. As a result, I have found myself unable to support the battle that some Saints are waging against a number of scientific conclusions. I have long respected the consensus of modern scientists, and I therefore believe that the earth is some four to five billions of years old, that man is the result of an evolutionary process, there was no universal flood as reported in Genesis, and that the Native Americans are of Asian not Israelite descent.

Further, I am not persuaded by the mountain of arguments thus far produced that the Book of Mormon is a translation of an ancient history, and I view as misguided the battle to prove or disprove Joseph's claim to be a prophet by resorting to arguments for or against Book of Mormon historicity. While I acknowledge my position to be unorthodox, I am strongly persuaded that numerous facts and arguments support my spiritual conviction that in creating the Book of Mormon, God

and Joseph worked together to produce an authentic book of divinely inspired scripture. This, my ultimate conclusion, is certainly mainstream Mormonism.

When I became aware of the vast holdings in the Church archives, I spent every afternoon for more than a decade researching manuscripts, many of which had just been catalogued and had never been read by any previous researcher. This experience was intoxicating. My specific Mormon interests have centered on Joseph's history and teachings, but I also have harbored an insatiable penchant for controversy, including numerous issues debated within the Mormon community and those raised by ex-Mormons and other critics. I relish discussion on points of disagreement. This sometimes results in a modification of my views. This path has led me to some positions regarding Mormon history and doctrinal belief again in the minority.

Through a series of circumstances, twenty-six years ago, I found myself behind the microphone at a small religious radio station—KBBX, "Utah's Golden Gospel Giant"—discussing my Mormon views with callers and guests. Almost invariably these discussions turn to the controversial. Since 1980, I have hosted a call-in talk show, "Mormon Miscellaneous," where I have invited advocates of all points of view. Participants include many guests—all of the Mormon categories: Mormon, non-Mormon, ex-Mormon, anti-Mormon, fundamentalist Mormon, and Jack Mormon; historians, ministers, authors, evangelists, professors, scientists; conservatives, liberals, atheists; the rational and irrational, and of course, the fanatics—discussing virtually every aspect of Mormon history, belief, and practice. Throughout these many years, I have freely expressed my views, which could be classified as orthodox, conservative, neutral, liberal, unorthodox, and heretical, depending on the issue. But again I turn to Joseph and insist that I am well within the mainstream, regardless of the various possible classifications of my beliefs, because first and foremost I am a believing Mormon.

In fact, I have lived my life within the Mormon mainstream, fully participating in every aspect of LDS life and practice. I have crafted my own personal brand of Mormonism from more than forty years of study of thousands of sources and extensive contemplation of numerous perspectives. I candidly acknowledge that my brand of Mormonism is unique; but then, I believe this is true of every student of the faith. I find it interesting and significant that through all my years of candid discussion, all that time a full LDS participant, no Church authority, general or local, has criticized me for my minority views or for my public expression of those views. I am certain that each Church leader could easily find among my beliefs things with which he would disagree. My personal experience has been "the liberty of thinking and believing as I please," the ideal which Joseph taught and defended.

HOW DO I deal with the tensions of holding my minority views? Joseph taught me that new truths and mysteries would be unveiled or discovered—some so startling that certain Saints would "fly to pieces like glass."



VAN HALE IN THE K-TALK STUDIO

Mormon Miscellaneous currently airs Sunday evenings from 5:00-7:00 pm MST on K-Talk Radio 630 AM. It can also be heard on the Internet at: MMS://STREAM.NETRO.CA/KTKK. Recordings of current programs, and a selection of past programs, are archived along other materials at MORMONMISCELLANEOUS.COM.

With this warning, and Joseph's admonition that the full truth is not within my grasp in this life, I am content with my belief that the final, absolute truth is not necessary now and that doctrines held by the best of Saints are, like mine, made up of a considerable amount of speculation.

The statements I have collected for this article support my insistence that I am within the mainstream. I believe I have traveled on the path introduced to me in 1964 by my encounter with Joseph's teachings—the path which he declared produces true Mormons: "We should gather all the good and true principles in the world and treasure them up, or we shall not come out true Mormons."

In May 1969, I was a young, idealistic returned missionary, enrolled at BYU in hot pursuit of truth, infused with Joseph's celebration of the grandeur of free thought. The campus was in full bloom. I was three weeks from getting married and eight weeks from reporting for active military duty during the Viet Nam war. I was preoccupied. But a General Authority arrived on campus to address the student body. He stepped up to the pulpit. His commanding personality captivated the audience. It was President Hugh B. Brown, my favorite speaker of that era. This and his topic, "An Eternal Quest—Freedom of the Mind," dissolved my preoccupation. To my delight, in his powerful persuasive manner, he declared what I recognized then, and even more now, as the very essence of the mind of Joseph:

One of the most important things in the world is freedom of the mind; from this all other freedoms spring. Such freedom is necessarily dangerous for one cannot think right without running the risk of thinking wrong, but generally more thinking is the antidote for the evils that spring from wrong thinking. More thinking is required, and we call upon you students to exercise your God-given right to think through every proposition that is submitted to you and be unafraid to express your opinions, with proper

respect for those to whom you talk and proper acknowledgment of your own shortcomings.

You young people live in an age when freedom of the mind is suppressed over much of the world. We must preserve it in the Church and in America and resist all efforts of earnest men to suppress it, for when it is suppressed, we might lose the liberties vouchsafed in the Constitution of the United States.

Preserve, then, the freedom of your mind in education and in religion, and be unafraid to express your thoughts and to insist upon your right to examine every proposition. We are not so much concerned with whether your thoughts are orthodox or heterodox as we are that you shall have thoughts.⁶⁸ ☞

NOTES

A NOTE ABOUT SOURCES: From the beginning, Joseph Smith was committed to creating and preserving records which were to be the sources for compiling of a complete history. The project of compilation, which has become the six-volume *History of the Church*, edited by B. H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902–1912), was begun by Joseph Smith in 1838, completed by Church historians in 1856, and published originally in serial form in the *Times and Seasons*, *Millennial Star*, and *Deseret News*. That history relies almost entirely on documents created during Joseph's lifetime. This process, the documents, and the individuals involved are explained in Dean C. Jessee, "The Writing of Joseph Smith's History" *BYU Studies* 11, no. 4 (Summer 1971).

Almost everything included in *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (hereafter *Teachings*), edited by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1938), one of my main sources in this paper, is drawn from *History of the Church*. Many of the quotations I use are from sermons of Joseph Smith. None was recorded stenographically. There are, however, minutes, reports, and sketches of his sermons written at the time. They were filled out, and when there was more than one report, they were amalgamated to provide a fuller approximation of Joseph's remarks and then included in the *History of the Church*. The original reports have been published in Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo: Religious Studies Center Brigham Young University, 1980). While on fine points *Words* is sometimes a better source than *Teachings*, in this article I have generally preferred *Teachings* because its version of Joseph Smith's sermons are smoother and a better approximation of his wording.

Nearly all of the original sources have been preserved and are housed in the LDS Archives. Many sources I have used come ultimately from the diaries and sermon reports of Wilford Woodruff, Willard Richards, William Clayton, Joseph Smith, Eliza Snow, Thomas Bullock, and several others. In recent years, many of these original documents have been published. The list includes Dean C. Jessee's three volumes published by Deseret Book: *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (1984) and *The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volumes 1 and 2* (1989 and 1992); Scott H. Faulring, ed., *An American Prophet's Record: The Diaries and Journals of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987); Scott Kenney, ed. *Wilford Woodruff's Journal*, 9 volumes (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1983); George D. Smith, ed., *An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995).

1. From a sermon delivered 9 July 1843. *Teachings*, 313.

2. In fact, Joseph issued a reprimand to those Saints so relying upon him as to neglect their personal growth. Speaking to the Relief Society on 26 May 1842, he referred to the "present state of the Church," declaring "that righteous persons could only deliver their own soul . . . that they were depending on the Prophet, hence were darkened in their minds." *Teachings*, 238; taken from "Relief Society Minutes," page 51, LDS Archives.

3. From the same 9 July 1843 sermon. *Teachings*, 313.

4. From a sermon delivered 3 October 1841 and published in *Times and Seasons* 2:578. See also *Teachings*, 193.

5. Report of Willard Richards in Joseph Smith's diary, 13 August 1843. *Teachings*, 321. In addition to the four quotations listed under this heading about the cloudburst of new revelation the Lord was ready to send forth, see also

Teachings, 137, 170, 193, 309, and 321. See also D&C 35:18; 131:26–33; 124:38, 41; 128:18.

6. From instructions on doctrine given 27 June 1839. *Teachings*, 149; also 237, 297.

7. From a council introducing temple ritual, 4 May 1842. *Teachings*, 237.

8. *Teachings*, 151; also D&C 93:1; 107:19.

9. From remarks given 21 May 1843. *Teachings*, 305.

10. From a sermon delivered 14 May 1843, reported by Wilford Woodruff. *Teachings*, 297.

11. From the King Follett Discourse, delivered 7 April 1844. *Teachings*, 348.

12. Joseph Smith, Letter from Liberty Jail to Isaac Galland, 22 March 1839. Published in *Times and Seasons* 1 (February 1840), 55.

13. Joseph Smith Diary, 11 June 1843.

14. From remarks given 12 May 1844. *Teachings*, 364. (*Teachings* inadvertently gives the date as 2 May 1844.)

15. From the King Follett Discourse, delivered 7 April 1844. *Teachings*, 348. On the concept that much knowledge will come after we pass on, see D&C 121:32.

16. If this is saying that there are things unknown to man about the creation of the earth to be revealed when the Lord comes, then it may recommend tentative conclusions regarding the creation accounts in Genesis, Moses, and Abraham.

17. From a sermon delivered 9 July 1843. *Teachings*, 313. A good source for understanding more about what Joseph Smith considered the "grand fundamental principles" of Mormonism, as well as for more on Joseph's urging the Saints to gather truth from whatever source it may come, see Don Bradley, "The Grand Fundamental Principles of Mormonism": Joseph Smith's Unfinished Reformation," *SUNSTONE*, April 2006, 32–41.

18. From a sermon delivered 23 July 1843. *Teachings*, 316.

19. From the Isaac Galland letter dated 22 March 1839 and published in *Times and Seasons* 1 (February 1840), 53–54.

20. *Ibid.*

21. From a letter dated 13 February 1844. *History of the Church* 6:213.

22. From a sermon delivered 24 March 1844. *Ibid.*, 6:273.

23. From the Isaac Galland letter dated 22 March 1839 and published in *Times and Seasons* 1 (February 1840), 53–54.

24. From conversations with his attorney, Justin Butterfield, on 31 December 1842. *History of the Church* 5:214.

25. From conversations with Justin Butterfield on 1 January 1843. *History of the Church* 5:215.

26. From the report of the sermon given by Willard Richards and William Clayton at a conference held 8 April 1843. *History of the Church* 5:340, 344. This is also found in *Teachings*, 287–94, but a paragraph important to this point is left out of that compilation.

27. *Teachings*, 287; also *History of the Church* 5:340.

28. From the *Messenger and Advocate* 1:137; also *Teachings*, 77.

29. Remarks by Joseph to those working on the temple. *History of the Church* 5:286; also 2:317–18; 2:352–53; 2:431.

30. From remarks given 12 May 1844. *Teachings*, 364.

31. From a sermon delivered 16 April 1843, reported by Wilford Woodruff. *History of the Church* 5:362.

32. From the King Follett Discourse, delivered 7 April 1844. *Teachings*, 343.

33. From remarks given 12 May 1844. *Teachings*, 364.

34. From the King Follett Discourse, delivered 7 April 1844. *Teachings*, 355.

35. From remarks of Joseph Smith at a conference of elders on 21 April 1834. *Teachings*, 70.

36. From a sermon delivered 11 June 1843. *Teachings*, 309.

37. From notes made by Wilford Woodruff of Joseph's remarks at a meeting held on 9 December 1841.

38. From a sermon dated 21 January 1844, as reported by Wilford Woodruff. *Teachings*, 331. (*Teachings* inadvertently gives the date as 20 January.)

39. From the King Follett Discourse, delivered 7 April 1844. *Teachings*, 348.

40. From a sermon delivered 11 June 1843. *Teachings*, 309.

41. For a nominal exception, see *Teachings*, 24.

42. *History of the Church*, 2:176.

43. *Messenger and Advocate* 1 (1 May 1835):122–24.

44. *History of the Church*, 2:176.

45. Lectures on Faith 5:2; also, Mosiah 15:3; D&C 93:4. The Lectures on Faith are seven lectures on theology given in 1834 at the School of the Prophets in Kirtland, Ohio. They were included in all editions of the Doctrine and Covenants from 1835 to 1921, when they were removed.

46. Parley P. Pratt, *An Answer to Mr. William Hewitt's Tract* (Manchester, England: W. R. Thomas, 1840), 9.

47. Lectures on Faith 5:2.

48. Lectures on Faith 5:3.

49. Discourse, 5 January 1841, reported by William Clayton. *Teachings*, 181.

50. Notes of a discussion recorded in the William McIntire Minute Book, 9 March 1841. *Words of Joseph Smith*, 64.

51. From a report of Joseph's Smith's 11 June 1843 discourse prepared by amalgamating the reports of Willard Richards and Wilford Woodruff. *Teachings*, 312. For the two reports, see *Words of Joseph Smith*, 209–14.

52. *Teachings*, 181, 312, 345–46, 348, 373; *Words of Joseph Smith*, 61, 64, 173, 382; D&C 130:22; also recorded in Wilford Woodruff's journal, 11 June 1843.

53. *Teachings*, 190, 276, 312, 370; *Words of Joseph Smith*, 63, 64, 160, 170, 173, 212, 214, 245, 382, 378; D&C 130:22.

54. Notes by Franklin D. Richards of Joseph Smith's sermon of 27 August 1843. *Words of Joseph Smith*, 245. This teaching is also recorded by George Laub in his report on a discourse by Joseph given 16 June 1844. *Words of Joseph Smith*, 305.

55. The original source for this verse is a sermon of Joseph Smith given 2 April 1843 and reported by William Clayton and Willard Richards. *Words of Joseph Smith*, 170, 173.



CREOSOTE

Creosote trees sweating into the night air.
It had rained and so the story goes these bushes,
once soaked, release this goop from which creosote
is made, and I can't breathe and I am thinking
the whole western half of the country stinks,
stews polluted. Soon a great big chunk of lard
will break off and float out into the Pacific,
and it serves us all right, those of us dead at night,
I thought. I was twenty-two, an only son
who should have been dead by now or in prison,
and I am looking up at the sky, those shooting
stars like comets across Death Valley, a blue-purple
shroud like bruised flesh, upon my youth, choking,
weighing me down to surrender, and I thought
about this perfect place to start walking, to disappear
forever, beyond this place where the night tucks
itself beyond mountains, creosote scent to erase my exit.

—VIRGIL SUAREZ

56. Joseph Smith Letterbook, LDS Archives. Quoted in Robert J. Woodford *The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants*, 3 vols (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1974), 1:53.

57. *History of the Church*, 5:264, 273; 6:100. The 1835 Doctrine and Covenants was the work of a committee appointed at a General Assembly (see page 255) and identified on the title page: "Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God and Compiled by Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, Frederick G. Williams, (Presiding Elders of said Church)." The title page of the 1844 Doctrine and Covenants reads: "Carefully Selected from the Revelations of God. By Joseph Smith, President of Said Church."

58. A notice in the *Nauvoo Neighbor* published 12 June 1844 announced that "The Book of Doctrine and Covenants will be published in about one month from this time." The first evidence that the new edition had been completed is found in an article in the 2 September 1844 *Times and Seasons* (6:636), which quotes from the new D&C.

59. These additional sections are D&C 103, 105, 112, 119, 124, 127, 128 (sections given here refer to their numbering in current editions of the Doctrine and Covenants).

60. For a discussion of the development of Joseph's view of God with a timetable, see Van Hale, "The Doctrinal Impact of the King Follett Discourse," *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 209–25.

61. The Book of Mormon doctrine of the Godhead is sufficiently ambiguous as to be irrelevant to this discussion, except perhaps as further demonstration that ambiguity on the Godhead is acceptable. The doctrine of the first Article of Faith is certainly that of the Book of Mormon (e.g. 3 Nephi 11:27, 36), but the Lecture Five doctrine and Joseph's Nauvoo doctrine venture far beyond that of the Book of Mormon. In several Book of Mormon passages, it seems that, in some sense, Jesus is the Father and the Son (e.g., Ether 4:12, 3:14, Mormon 9:12, Mosiah 15, etc.), perhaps supporting a position of the Father and Son as numerically one person. Yet, in 3 Nephi 11–28 and forward, in many passages it seems that the Father and Jesus are numerically two persons in two locations: Jesus, ministering to the Nephites, frequently refers to his Father, and their Father, not as there among them as he is, but in heaven. See, for example, 3 Nephi 12:48, 18:35, 19:22–23, 26:2, 27:28.

62. The original of this letter of 20 March 1839 is preserved in the LDS Archives, and a transcript is published in *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, 389–407. In Joseph's letter to Emma the next day (408–09), he informs her that the 20 March letter sent to her is actually an epistle for the Church, and he instructs her to keep the original and have it copied for circulation among the Brethren. The first half of the letter, which includes that found in D&C 121:1–33, was published in *Times and Seasons* 1 (May 1840):99–104. D&C 121:1–33 was excerpted from this letter, but from the original rather than the edited version published in the *Times and Seasons*. A comparison of the *Times and Seasons* version with D&C 121:28, 32 reveals no hint of a plurality of Gods in the former while the other suggests that such will be revealed (v. 28) and proclaims that a council was held, "the Council of the Eternal God of all other gods" (v. 32). The phrase "whether there be one god or many gods, they shall be manifest" was left out of the *Times and Seasons*, where the verse comparable to D&C 121:32 reads, "ordained in the midst of the council of heaven in the presence of the eternal God. . . ."

63. *Teachings*, 320. Joseph's diary entry for 13 August 1843 reads: "I am not like other men. My mind is continually occupied with the business of the day, and I have to depend entirely upon the living God for every thing I say on such occasions as these." At this time, Joseph's diary was being kept by Willard Richards.

64. Concerning the history of the text of this discourse, see Van Hale, "The King Follett Discourse Textual History & Criticism," *SUNSTONE*, September-October 1983, 4–12.

65. From the King Follett Discourse, delivered 7 April 1844. *Teachings*, 343–52. The views Joseph presented were too much for some Saints, including William Law, Joseph's second counselor in the Church presidency, and apparently even Sidney Rigdon, his first counselor. In fact, as Joseph was about to present scripture in support of his view that the Father had experienced mortality, he exclaimed: "Mark it, Elder Rigdon!" (*Teachings*, 346), which I assume indicates that Joseph was aware that Rigdon was familiar with his view but disagreed. Many of the King Follett teachings were included in a list of grievances published two months later by an organized group of dissenters of which Law was one of the principal leaders.

66. From a sermon given 16 June 1844, reported by Thomas Bullock. *Teachings*, 370.

67. From Joseph Smith Diary, 13 August 1843. *Teachings*, 320.

68. Hugh B. Brown, "An Eternal Quest—Freedom of the Mind," *BYU Speeches of the Year* (Provo: Brigham Young University Press, 1969).