

THE BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS

CONTROVERSY

REVIEWED



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CHURCH OF CHRIST, (Temple Lot)  
Independence, Missouri  
1950

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An examination of some of the controversial  
claims made for the rejection of  
THE BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS

By some of the  
Divisions  
of  
The Restoration.



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## FOREWORD

The purpose of this review is to focus attention upon certain controversial aspects of the Book of Commandments question, which has engaged the interest of students of the Restoration for many years. During debates with the Reorganized Church and others, and through tracts and quarterlies published by them, opportunity was afforded to observe the very untenable positions they have taken, which has led many to erroneous conclusions as to the facts concerning its contents and circumstances surrounding its publication.

It is the authors' considerate opinion that as the result of such erroneous information put forth to the public relative to this Book, those responsible have come under the indictment of an early revelation to the Church. This revelation, never a part of the Book of Commandments, was given in September, 1832, less than a year after the Preface was given, and reads in part as follows:

"And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief; and because you have treated lightly the things you have received; **which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation.** And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all, and they shall remain under this condemnation until they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments, which I have given them, not only to say but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom." D. & C., 83:8.

The Book of Commandments contains the revelations as they were originally given to the Church of Christ, through the Prophet Joseph Smith, Jr., in their original form, covering a period from July, 1828 to November 1, 1831, at which time the Preface was given by revelation. This prefatory revelation was the authorization of God, through His prophet to publish the Book of Commandments, which in 1833, appeared as "A Book of Commandments for the

Government of the Church of Christ, Organized According to Law, on April 6, 1830."

At a later date the revelations thus published as the word of God to this generation, appeared in the "Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints," published in 1835, at Kirtland, Ohio. In this book, the original revelations which had been carefully reviewed and arranged by Joseph Smith, Jr., himself, for the Book of Commandments, were mutilated and changed almost beyond recognition so as to include provisions for doctrines and officers that were not provided for in the original version, nor found as part of the earlier teachings of the church. As found in the Book of Commandments they agree with the teachings of Christ in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon; in the Doctrine and Covenants an apostate form of doctrine and organization was set forth.

When this was done, we had a new church order, with a new name, "THE CHURCH OF THE LATTER DAY SAINTS." Since that time many attempts have been made to correct the damage thus done to the name of the church, by variously calling it the Church of Christ of Latter Day Saints, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, the New Organization, and the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. However, none of these names agree with the name given in the original revelations to the church, nor with the Book of Mormon, which gave it the official and inspired name of the Church of Christ, (3 Nephi, 12:14-21,) under which name the church was organized April 6, 1830, and continues, with its headquarters on the Temple Lot, Independence, Missouri, 'till the present day.

When the honest student of the Restoration takes these revelations, as originally published in their original form in the Book of Commandments and in the Evening and Morning Star, at Independence, Missouri, 1831 to 1833, and compares them with the mutilated and changed versions as found in all editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, it will become quite apparent why the Lord rebuked the

church for treating lightly the things they had received in "the former commandments," and it is for the reason of helping those who are honestly seeking a solution for many of our problems in the Restoration today, to a knowledge of these truths, that this review is now published and given to the church of the Restoration. What our forefathers in this Restoration may have done that was wrong in this matter rests with them and a just God, but we, in this day, who are seeking the way of redeeming Zion and making the gathering of His saints a glorious reality, will be held accountable if we continue to perpetuate their mistakes by blindly following the errors found in the Doctrine and Covenants, and by such means frustrate the work of God to that extent that He will spew us out of His mouth and raise up another people who will do his will.

Therefore, to those who are seeking with pure hearts and open minds the truth of the Restoration, we present this work, and pray that you, with all the honest in heart, will soon be prepared as a people for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

The Authors.



## INTRODUCTORY

To All Students and Lovers of the Restored Gospel of Jesus Christ, and All Others Whom it May Concern:

We, the Board of Publications of the Church of Christ, have had the privilege of reviewing this work in manuscript form.

Herein we find much data hitherto unavailable to the public at large; things of great importance and worth to all who found their hope of salvation in the Gospel restored in 1830.

We therefore feel this work will be of value as a reference text book on the matter treated.

The Board of Publications  
The Church of Christ, (Temple Lot)  
Independence, Missouri



## DEDICATION

To those, now gone to their reward, who spent their lives defending the truth of the Restored Gospel and to those yet living who courageously defend that truth, we sincerely dedicate this work, remembering that "truth, tho' crushed to earth, will rise again."

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### CHAPTER ONE: The Necessity for Publishing the Book of Commandments. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 1

Book of Commandments second in importance to the Book of Mormon. — manuscript guarded jealously, — wide circulation necessary for preservation, — prized highly by early church, — both large factions claim part of Mss.,—book had beginning in summer of 1830, — Joseph Smith, Jr., began to arrange and copy revelations, — assisted by John Whitmer in compilation, — W. W. Phelps instructed to purchase printing equipment and take it to Missouri, — Oliver Cowdery appointed to assist Phelps as editor,— Evening and Morning Star first newspaper, and the Book of Commandments first book published west of Mississippi River, — Independence was raw frontier village at the time, — no other press between Independence and the Pacific Coast at the time.

### CHAPTER TWO: Divergent Views Relative to the Period of November 1-12, 1831, During Which Time the Preparation for Publishing the Book of Commandments Was Completed. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 6

The publication of the Book of Commandments, the chief matter of business of four special conferences, all held at Hiram, Ohio, during this period, — views of several spokesmen for the Reorganized Church examined, — evidence proves that Joseph Smith, Jr., was in Hiram the entire time, — Joseph was instructed by the conference to review and arrange, and correct errors in manuscript, — Elders present bore testimony of the truthfulness of the Book, — Reorganized leaders disagree on time and circumstances of these conferences, — Far West Record throws light on the matter, — some "facts" examined, and facts given, etc.

### CHAPTER THREE: The Facts Concerning the Period of November 1-12, 1830, During Which Time Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer Were Present in Hiram, Ohio, the Entire Time. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 12

The Far West Record furnishes factual evidence on these conferences, — minutes quoted, — furnished by Joseph Fielding Smith, Historian of the L.D.S. Church in Utah, — entire minutes of this period given, — Joseph Smith, O. Cowdery and J. Whitmer present and took active parts, — Preface give, — several other revelations given affecting the Book, — Joseph Smith personally reviewed and arranged revelations, — McLellan attempted to imitate one of the revelations and failed, — Testimony of Elders to B. of C. given by revelation and testified to by them, — David Whitmer was present also, — McLellan charges that the testimony of Twelve to Doctrine and Covenants was a "Base Forgery" and plagiarism of the Testimony here given by the Elders in 1831, — copious footnotes at end of chapter.

CHAPTER FOUR: Blame Placed Upon Scribes of Joseph Smith, Jr., for Alleged Mistakes in the Book of Commandments Not Justified. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 27

Evidence shows that Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer were all present until after November 12th. — arguments of various leaders of the Reorganized Church examined on this point. — Apostle F. Henry Edward's position given. — W. W. Smith contradicts Edwards. — Ebenezer Robinson's testimony given. — Orson Pratt, first editor of the Millennial Star reveals how D. & C. 17: 16, 17, was changed. — Rigdon was one to call for review made by Joseph Smith. — Parley P. Pratt gives eyewitness account on reception of revelations. — the position of Heman C. Smith examined. — David Whitmer blames Rigdon for alterations, etc.

CHAPTER FIVE: The Preface to the First Edition of the Book of Commandments Precludes Revelations after November 1, 1831. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 35

Purpose of the Preface stated. — position of Apostle J. F. Curtis taken in the PeKalb debate and elsewhere, examined. — committee appointed in D. C. 70:1, 2, not instructed to publish revelations but were stewards to handle the finances accruing from sales, etc. — Cowdery appointed editor of Star, not to compile B. of Com. — Preface did not authorize publishing of revelations after November 1, 1831. — some revelations prohibited by revelation from God to be printed in the Book.

CHAPTER SIX: The Appendix Revelation Had No Place as Part of the First Edition of the Book of Commandments. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 41

The so-called "appendix" not given until November 3, 1831, two days after the Preface to B. of C. — Joseph Smith states that it was an "appendix" to Doctrine and Covenants. — W. W. Phelps statement in the Star examined. — J. R. Haldeman gives his view of the matter. — elders at November Special Conferences testified on the "commandments lying before" them, which did not include the Appendix revelation. — David Whitmer and others received Commandments early in Spring of 1833. — possibly a second edition by July when mob destroyed the printing office.

CHAPTER SEVEN: A Review of the Testimony of David Whitmer Versus the Reorganized Church on the Copyright of the Book of Commandments, Etc. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 44

The copyright question considered. — David Whitmer claims that it was copyrighted. — the late Joseph Smith questioned Whitmer's claim. — also as to whether Book of Commandments had been received authoritatively. — McLellan's position re-examined. — David Whitmer as an eyewitness. — Heman C. Smith speaks highly of David Whitmer. — Curtis gives his views which do not correctly represent Whitmer. — the pro and con of controversy given. — Book

of Commandments was bound in paper covers, — "temporary binding" by order of Joseph Smith, etc., — the "loose sheets in the street" arguments examined, — John Taylor gives his testimony of preserving copies of the Book, — Joseph Smith only found four errors in the book as printed, — the book complete with 160 pages, — the book was copyrighted in Missouri, — evidence of more than one edition revealed by comparison of title pages, — authors have a microfilm reproduction of original in New York Public Library.

CHAPTER EIGHT: The Book of Commandments was Received by the Church of Christ in 1831-34 as Being Correct and Authoritative. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 55

The Bishop and Elders instructed to read and obey revelations as printed in Star, — versions in both the Star and Book of Commandments agree, — Elder Leonard Rich was selling the book in 1834 and was tried by the council, — quoted by Joseph Smith in preparing the Lectures of Faith appearing in the D. & C., — these lectures contained in most of early editions of D. & C., — but left out of Reorganized editions later, — position of late Joseph Smith of Reorganized Church re-examined, — Book of Commandments appealed to as an authoritative source of doctrine in the "Appeal" sent to civil authorities, — Lyman Wight was tried for saying the Book of Commandments was "a celestial law, and Doctrine and Covenants a teistical law," — title pages of the original Book of Commandments reproduced for comparison.

CHAPTER NINE: W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer Were Appointed to Select Material for The Evening and Morning Star, But Not to Revise the Book of Commandments. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 64

Whitmer and Cowdery were custodians of the manuscript of the Book of Commandments, — W. W. Phelps, Whitmer and Cowdery appointed to make selections for the Star, — cut of page 52 of the original Book of Commandments showing comparisons with 1825 Doctrine and Covenants, — Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ mutilated, — Historian of the Utah Church reveals the reasons for these alterations, — name of the church changed in 1834, — provision made for revising the revelations to conform with heresies brought into the church.

CHAPTER TEN: Additions to the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ and Section Sixty-eight of the Doctrine and Covenants Provide for a First Presidency. \_\_\_\_\_ Page 70

Committee who compiled Doctrine and Covenants took revelations purloined from the Book of Commandments, — theories of progressive thought examined, — alterations in several revelations examined and compared, — effects on organic structure of the church noted, — the Articles and Covenants was given in June 1829, — this revelation had been printed three times before 1824, each time in harmony with Book of Commandments, — the state-

ment of W. W. Phelps erroneously ascribed to Oliver Cowdery in the Kirtland Reprint of the Star, — the late Joseph Smith's position examined and refuted again, — only eleven words different in July, 1833 Star as compared with same in June 1832, version of Articles and Covenants, — Sidney Rigdon set apart to "arrange the Doctrine and Covenants," — blamed by Oliver Cowdery and others for alterations, — over 1700 alterations found when Doctrine and Covenants was compared with the Book of Commandments, — prime purpose indicates provision for the unscriptural office of a first presidency, — Section 68 compared with Star version of this revelation, — cut showing these alterations, — David Whitmer pleads with the Reorganized Church to retrace its steps, — effect of these changes, — whole church under condemnation for treating lightly the revelations of God.





## CHAPTER ONE

**The Necessity for Publishing the Book of Commandments**

It is quite evident that after the Book of Mormon was translated and published to the world, the infant Church of Christ, which was organized by Joseph Smith, Jr., and six Elders, on April 6, 1830, turned its attention to the publication of the revelations in book form for the benefit of its ministry and members, who, by the Fall of 1831, were increased in number and scattered abroad in widely separated groups, making it impossible for them to have frequent access to the manuscript revelations, which remained in the hands of Joseph Smith, Jr. It is quite evident also, from the reading of these revelations which were given to the early church and which had so important a part in establishing it, that the ministry should have them for reference purposes when they should go to an unbelieving public with their message.

With such a need we can readily see that it was highly important for these revelations not only to be preserved and guarded jealously in manuscript form, but also to be published correctly and preserved in printed form as soon as practical so as to be widely circulated among the members of the Church, thus affording a better way of preserving them from destruction at the hands of their enemies.

We firmly believe that such was the intent of the early elders of the Church of Christ when they undertook the task of preparing the revelations for publication in book form. From records which have been preserved and handed down to us we learn that the Elders at that time, "prized the revelations to be worth to the church the riches of the whole earth, speaking temporally."

Both of the larger factions of the Restoration claim to have parts of the original manuscript and copies of the original Book of Commandments as published in 1833. It is a credit to them that they have thus preserved them. It is regrettable however, that the entire manuscript has not been preserved intact, for it would unquestionably have thrown



increased light upon this most interesting and controversial subject. However, sufficient information is at hand to prepare a critical review of the historical background of the Book which shall be of value to student and layman alike.

The Book of Commandments had its beginning, or origin as a book, to be used by the ministry and church, in the Summer of 1830. In July of that year Joseph Smith, Jr., received three revelations, one of which instructed him to write the things that would be given him by the Comforter, (Bk. of Com. 25:7), and he "shortly after \* \* \* began to arrange and copy the revelations which he had received from time to time; in which (he) was assisted by John Whitmer." (Millennial Star, Vol. 14, page 36, the Supplement.)

In June 1831, "W. W. Phelps arrived at Kirtland, with his family. He desired to know the will of God concerning himself, and in answer to petition, received instruction directing him that he was called to the ministry and also to assist in literary concerns." Reorg. Ch. Hist. Vol. 1, page 198.

This instruction is to be found in a revelation given June 1831, and printed later in the Book of Commandments: "and again, you, (W. W. Phelps,) shall be ordained to assist my servant Oliver Cowdery and to do the work of printing." Bk. of Com. 57:5.

About the middle of September 1831, a conference was held at Hiram, Ohio, where Joseph Smith, Jr., had taken up residence with his family in preparation for beginning the translation of the Scriptures, (Reorg. Ch. Hist. Vol. 1, page 215.) at which time, "W. W. Phelps was instructed to stop at Cincinnati, on his way to Missouri, and purchase a press and type for the purpose of establishing and publishing a monthly paper at Independence, Jackson County, Missouri to be called the Evening and Morning Star." (Reorg. Ch. Hist. Vol. 1, page 219.) This paper, the Evening and Morning Star was the first newspaper published west of the Mississippi River. We quote the following interesting accounts concerning the Evening and Morning Star and the Book of

Commandments, which appeared in recent articles on the editorial pages of the Kansas City Star and Times. Loy Otis Banks in his article, "Mob Action Terminated Publication of Jackson County's First Periodical," said:

"Independence was a raw frontier village with a few scattered houses, a log court house and a half dozen stores when Joseph Smith looked down on it for the first time from a summit near the Blue River in the Summer of 1831. But even from a distance the land looked promising. It seemed to him then a valley of peace, the promised land.

"Parley P. Pratt, who had been sent out several months before, with Oliver Cowdery, Peter Whitmer and Ziba Peterson as missionaries among Missouri's Indians, reported at a conference of the Church of the Latter Day Saints (it was the Church of Christ, C.L.W..) at Hiram, Ohio, in 1831, that Independence had no printing press and but a single church. Upon hearing this news, officials of the Church instructed W. W. Phelps \* \* \* to stop at Cincinnati on his way to Missouri, and purchase press and type to publish a monthly paper at Independence."

\* \* \* \* \*

"Editor Phelps took great pride in the fact that the Star was located 'about 120 miles west of any press in the State.' A pioneer religious newspaper, the Star was the first regularly published newspaper in Jackson County."—The K. C. Star.

In an article by John Edward Hicks, entitled, "Pioneer Printing Press of This Area Moved Westward with the Gold Seekers," he said:

"Few printing presses in the history of American journalism have had such an interesting career as the press mentioned recently in the Star on which was printed the Evening and Morning Star of the Mormons at Independence in 1832.

"When W. W. Phelps, printer-poet and leader in the Mormon church, bought the press in Cincinnati and set it up in Independence, there was no other printing press be-

tween that point and the Pacific. It antedated by three years the Cherokee press of Samuel Worcester at Park Hill, seventeen miles from old Ft. Gibson in the Indian territory, and by the same span the press of the Shawnee Sun, an Indian language newspaper published by the Rev. Johnston Lykens at the Shawnee Mission."—The K. C. Star.

We now give an excerpt from another article from the pen of John Edward Hicks, appearing in a more recent issue of the Kansas City Star, entitled, "First Book Printed West of St. Louis Highlights Valuable Yale Collection:"

"The frontier town of Independence, Missouri, was the site in 1833 of the printing press which turned out the first book printed in that immense territory between St. Louis and the Pacific Coast.

"Written by Joseph Smith, founder and head of the Mormon Church, the work was titled, 'A Book of Commandments, For the Government of the Church of Christ, Organized According to Law, on the 6th of April, 1830.' The book, of which only three copies are known to be in existence, has become a rare and valuable item of Western Americana.

"The title page bears the inscription: 'Zion, Published by W. W. Phelps & Co., 1833.' Zion was the name by which the Mormons knew Independence when in accordance with a revelation said to have been received by Smith, it was decided in July, 1831, to buy lands and settle in that four year old town which had already had much to recommend it to a person of practical outlook. It was the head of transportation over the well established Santa Fe trail, it was the outfitting place for western wayfarers and it was in position to benefit largely from the steamboat traffic just beginning to burgeon on the Missouri River. It seemed destined to become what so many towns on the river had hopes of being—"The New York of the West.'"

\* \* \* \*

"Establishment of a printing office was among the first things on the agenda. In Cincinnati, W. W. Phelps, having

been selected as printer, bought a press and other material for producing a monthly publication, the Evening and Morning Star. The first issue appeared in June 1832," etc., —K. C. Star.

On this press was printed not only the Evening and Morning Star but also the first edition of the Book of Commandments and possibly a second in 1833. Thus we can see the need of an expanding church for literature setting forth its doctrine and faith. We say "possibly a second" edition, for the reason that on comparison of the title pages of several so-called original copies we find them all hand set but different in their make-up. Notably we compare the title page of the photogravure printed in the "Gospel Doctrine Sunday School Lesson" for 1940, of the Utah Church, in the Journal of History Vol. 14, No. 2, page 134, of the Reorganized Church and the original Book of Commandments in the New York Public Library, of which we have a certified microfilm reproduction, from which we print the title page in this volume.

## CHAPTER TWO

**Divergent Views Relative to the Period of November 1-12, 1831, During Which Time the Preparation for Publishing the Book of Commandments was Completed**

A few weeks after the events, set forth in the previous chapter, took place, another series of conferences started on November 1, 1831, at Hiram, Ohio, and continued until the late afternoon of November 12, 1831, the main purpose being to consider steps to be taken relative to the publication of the Book of Commandments. During these conferences, of which there were four special conferences held in this one place, Joseph Smith, Jr., reviewed and arranged the revelations as they were to be published, and made corrections where necessary. The elders arose, during one such special conference, one after the other and bore testimony of the truthfulness of the revelations as thus presented to them; and provision was made as to the number of copies to be printed the first issue. Finally, in the last of these special conferences, at Hiram, on the 12th, this manuscript of the Book of Commandments was blessed by Joseph Smith and intrusted to Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, (who were likewise blessed,) to be carried to Missouri to be printed by W. W. Phelps & Co. The minutes covering this period, with footnotes, are given in a subsequent chapter.

Much controversy has arisen as to the time and place of these conferences and leading spokesmen for the Reorganized Church are not agreed on the matter. There is not the least evidence to support the claims of these men that all four of these special conferences were not held at Hiram, Ohio. This place was the residence of Joseph Smith at the time and the evidence will show that these four special conferences were all held at Hiram, Ohio, occasioned by the necessity of the prophet reviewing and arranging the revelations that were soon to be published. Concerning these conferences we have this statement by the Historian of the Reorganized Church:

"A special conference was held, **probably at Hiram, on Tuesday, November 1**, on account of the proposed departure of Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer for Missouri. At this conference further instruction was given and a preface to the Book of Commandments revealed."—Reorg. Ch. Hist. Vol. 1, page 221.

The phrase, "probably at Hiram, on Tuesday, November 1," has been emphasized to call attention to the fact that in light of information which was available to him this statement is misleading to those who seek the truth, as though there was doubt in the mind of the Historian as to the actual date and place of these special conferences. Some have taken the position as above stated, while others have taken the position that it was not held till the 12th of November after Cowdery and Whitmer were supposed to have left for Missouri. Both positions are erroneous and evidently an effort to make it appear that Joseph Smith was not in Hiram during this entire period, but that he was holding three special conferences somewhere else, and was therefore not in a position to review and arrange the revelations for publication, and to give his personal attention thereto; and that others, in his absence from Hiram, prepared the copies of the revelations which were carried by Cowdery and Whitmer to Missouri, from which the first edition of the Book of Commandments was printed. They also allege that while Joseph was thus away from Hiram, others of the brethren made alterations in these revelations and as a consequence it became necessary at a later date (1835) to correct the errors thus made and publish the revised revelations anew in the Doctrine and Covenants. Such arguments are ridiculous, and without foundation. We give herewith the unsupportable positions thus referred to and quote the following from the History of Joseph Smith, as he compiled it in 1838, and later published it in the Times and Seasons:

"My time was occupied closely in **receiving** (This word receiving was a misprint in T. & S., it should have been **reviewing**, see Ut. Ch. Hist. Vol 1, page 235, C.L.W.) the commandments and sitting in conference for nearly two

weeks; for we held from the first to the twelfth of November four special conferences. In the last which was held at Brother Johnson's, in Hiram, after deliberate consideration, in consequence of the Book of Revelations, now to be printed," etc. Times and Seasons Vol. 5, page 512.

During the debate which was held between representatives of the Church of Christ, and of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, at DeKalb, Illinois, in January, 1928, this position was taken by the Church of Christ:

" \* \* It was possible for them to have held four special conferences in two weeks at Hiram, Ohio, as the Elders were to a large extent gathered there and they were deliberating on those questions of having the revelations printed. Joseph Smith says:

" 'The Book of Revelations now to be printed being the foundation of the church in these last days and a benefit to the world, showing that the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom of our Savior are again intrusted to man, \* \* \* therefore the conference prized the revelations to be worth to the church the riches of the whole earth.' "

"Here these revelations that were to be sent up to Independence, Missouri, to be printed, were prized more than the riches of the whole earth. And yet my opponent would have us believe that Joseph Smith and those Elders were so careless in what they were doing that they sent a mutilated copy of those revelations by John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery as the ones who would have the stewardship of those revelations and who would answer for that stewardship in the day of judgment." Wheaton-Curtis Debate Manuscript page 282-3.

In the speech that followed the position of the Reorganized Church was set forth as follows:

"O he says, they had four special conferences in one place for twelve days! That is the limit. I had him in a corner that he didn't know how to crawl out of. Four special conferences in twelve days, and all these revelations given. It looks to me that they would have had one con-

ference and had it last twelve days instead of having had four special conferences in the one place. **No that was not it.** (Bold face mine. C. L. W.)

**"Joseph was away attending these three other special conferences and the one, the last one, was held at Hiram.** So he had nothing to do with the changing of the revelations. If that is the best argument my opponent can put up he had better quit." Wheaton-Curtis Debate Manuscript, pages 289-90.

This gives you a fair example of the lines of argument of the proponents of the Reorganized Church's position, and these examples are as profuse and opposed as there are proponents, as we shall show in this review. Notwithstanding the fact that Joseph Smith, Jr., plainly stated that he was at Hiram during this entire period, and that he was "occupied closely in **reviewing** the commandments and sitting in conference for nearly two weeks," they wrest this statement to make it appear that Joseph was away from Hiram for "three other special conferences," between November 1st and 12th, 1831.

After the above debate was held in DeKalb, Illinois, during the winter of 1928, the Reorganized Church rushed into print with a pamphlet entitled "Our Beliefs Defended," to circulate at the Spring conference of that year, to offset the damaging effects of the Debate which was expected to be published at once, but due to the fact the financial situation of the Church of Christ would not permit them to print it at the time, and the fact that this debate was damaging to the Reorganized Church it has not as yet been printed by either side, though it would be a rich source of material for the earnest student. Some time we hope it will be published and made a source of study for the whole Restoration. The Church of Christ has nothing to fear from doing so.

In the aforesaid pamphlet, "Our Beliefs Defended," they set forth their position again on this point, and it is just as ridiculous as the first, for they say: **"Let us note a few facts:** First, we wish to call attention to a statement which will show that Joseph Smith was absent most of the time



while these copies were being prepared. The statement is found in Times and Seasons Vol. 5, page 512." (Here is again quoted the statement above given by them., C. L. W.)

"The reader will remember that Joseph Smith was to prepare the revelations between the first and fifteenth of November, or sooner if possible, but the statement above quoted shows that from the first to the twelfth of November Joseph Smith was engaged in holding four special conferences, and incidentally he tells us that the last one was held at Hiram at Brother Johnson's, **but the three others were held somewhere else.** O. Cowdery and John Whitmer left Ohio for Missouri November 10, 1831, (see History of John Whitmer.) Certainly Joseph Smith could not have had much time to work on the copies of the revelations from November 1 to 10, when during this time, November 1 to 12, he was attending four conferences, only one of them being held in Hiram." Our Beliefs Defended, pages 25-26.

In the succeeding chapter we will show that this statement was pure sophistry, woven out of whole cloth, resulting in deception to those of their number who are seeking the truth. No where in all the history that was written by the pen of Joseph Smith does he say that he was away from Hiram at any time during the period under consideration. We can not help but believe that the leaders of the Reorganized Church had access to the Far West Record to be found in the Church Library in Utah, just the same as we have had, and having had such access they know that they cannot successfully defend the position taken on this matter by their representatives. They know from that record that Joseph Smith was present in Hiram during this entire time and that John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery did not leave for Missouri until after November 12, 1831, or after the conclusion of the last day of these special conferences.

We now give you a reference which Apostle Curtis used in the De Kalb Debate which contradicts his argument as above given, showing that these brethren left on the 20th of November instead of the 10th, according to the words of

John Whitmer:

"About this time it was in contemplation for Oliver Cowdery to go to Zion and carry with him the revelations and commandments; and I also received a revelation to go with him. We left Ohio on the 20th of November, 1831; and arrived in Zion, Missouri, January 5, 1832." Journal of History, page 135, Volume 1, (Quoted by J. F. Curtis in DeKalb Debate, page 350 of debate manuscript.)

This date, November 20, 1831, is more in harmony with facts found elsewhere than is the 10th, for by reading the minutes of the special conference at Hiram, Ohio, for November 12th it will be found that both John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery were present and took part in its proceedings.

As we read these conflicting positions taken by first one and then another of the representative men of the Reorganized Church, one contending November 1st was the only time Joseph was at Hiram and the other that it was November 12th, we are made to wonder what our Reorganized brethren mean when they say, "Let us note a few facts."

**In noting facts,** we now take the opportunity of setting forth a few ourselves, for the purpose of helping these brethren to get THE FACTS clear concerning this eventful period between November 1 to 12, 1831, and to show to all men that the position of the Church of Christ taken in the DeKalb Debate was in harmony with those facts.

## CHAPTER THREE

**The Facts Concerning the Period of November 1 to 12, 1831, During Which Time Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer Were Present in Hiram, Ohio, the Entire Time.**

We are indebted to the Historian of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints in Utah for the following minutes taken from the Far West Record covering the period of November 1 to 12, 1831, which he, Joseph Fielding Smith, personally verified for us. These minutes show conclusively that Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer were present in Hiram, Ohio, during this entire time, and were in constant attendance at **four special conferences** held in that place. In the light of this evidence it is not tenable for the representatives of the Reorganized Church to persist in claiming otherwise. We hope therefore that in presenting the minutes from the Far West Record covering this period we can let this phase of the controversy rest.

Joseph Fielding Smith, Historian of the Utah Church, allowed us, in 1932, to handle the original Far West Record. It was a very old leather bound book. The pages were yellow with age and very brittle. All the entries were in long hand. Each man who acted as secretary or "clerk" signed his name at the close of each session. We took the pains to compare the hand writing of each of these men as thus entered in the record with letters and documents known to be in their handwriting and in each instance they were identical.

For emphasis the names of the three brethren above named, i.e., Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, and John Whitmer, are underscored by the authors of this book for the purpose of showing the several times they were present and took part in these Special Conferences, which were called for the purpose, in the main, of considering the printing of the Book of Commandments. As we examine these minutes, it will be shown that the greater part of the time was taken up with the consideration of this important publication.

**THE MINUTES FOLLOW**

"Minutes of a Conference held in Hiram, Portage County, Ohio, November 1, 1831.

**Elders Present**

<b>Joseph Smith, Jr.,</b>	Sidney Rigdon,
<b>Oliver Cowdery,</b>	William E. McLellin
David Whitmer,	Orson Hyde,
<b>John Whitmer,</b>	Luke Johnson,
Peter Whitmer, Jr.,	Lyman Johnson.

"Brother Sidney Rigdon appointed Moderator and Oliver Cowdery Clerk. Brother Oliver Cowdery made a request desiring the mind of the Lord through this conference of elders to know how many copies of the Book of Commandments, it was the will of the Lord should be published in the first edition of that work. Voted that there be ten thousand copies struck. Adjourned till afternoon.

"John Whitmer.

"Preface received by inspiration." (See footnote 1.)

"Conference commenced according to adjournment Brother Sidney Rigdon appointed Moderator and Oliver Cowdery, Clerk.

"Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., said that inasmuch as the Lord has bestowed a great blessing upon us in giving commandments and revelations, asked the conference what testimony they were willing to attach to these commandments which should shortly be sent to the world. A number of the brethren arose and said that they were willing to testify to the world that they knew that they were of the Lord. (See Footnote 2.)

"Revelation received relative to the same. (See Footnote 3.) Conference adjourned until morning.

"Oliver Cowdery, Clerk of Conference."

"Conference convened according to adjournment. (November 2, 1831.)

"Brother Oliver Cowdery appointed Moderator and John Whitmer, clerk.

"Opened, prayer by Brother Oliver Cowdery.

"Brother Lyman Johnson was then ordained to the High Priesthood under the hand of Brother Sidney Rigdon.

"The revelation of last evening read by the moderator the brethren then arose in turn and bore witness to the truth of the Book of Commandments. After which Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., arose and expressed his feelings and gratitude concerning the commandment and preface received yesterday. (See Footnote 4.)

"Conference closed. Prayer by Oliver Cowdery.

"John Whitmer, Clerk of Conference."

"Minutes of a special Conference held in Hiram, Portage County, Ohio, November 8, 1831.

#### Elders Present

<b>Joseph Smith, Jr.,</b>	Christian Whitmer,
<b>Oliver Cowdery,</b>	Sidney Rigdon,
<b>John Whitmer,</b>	William E. McLellan
Peter Whitmer,	Luke Johnson.

"Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., appointed Moderator and John Whitmer, clerk.

"Opened, prayer by Joseph Smith, Jr.

"Remarks by Brother Sidney Rigdon on the errors or the mistakes which are in commandments and revelations made either by the translation in consequence of the slow way of the scribe at the time of receiving or by the scribes themselves.

"Resolved by this conference that Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., correct those errors or mistakes which he may discover

by the Holy Spirit while reviewing the revelations and commandments and also the fulness of the scriptures. (See Footnote 5.)

"Resolved by this conference that Brother Oliver Cowdery shall (copy, correct and select,) all writings which go to the world through the printing press (EXCEPT THE REVELATIONS AND COMMANDMENTS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD) and this according to the commandment given in Missouri July 20, 1831. (Footnote 6.) (Emphasis mine. C.L.W.)

"Closed in prayer by Brother Sidney Rigdon.

"John Whitmer."

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"Minutes of a special conference held in Hiram, November 9, 1831.

Present:

**Joseph Smith, Jr.,**

**Oliver Cowdery,**

**John Whitmer,**

Peter Whitmer,

Christian Whitmer,

Sidney Rigdon,

Luke Johnson,

Lyman Johnson.

"Brother Oliver Cowdery appointed Moderator and John Whitmer clerk.

"Opened, prayer by Brother Oliver Cowdery.

"Brother Sylvester Hulett and John Noah expressed desires to preach the word if thought proper by this conference. Voted that these two brethren be ordained according to the voice of the church in which they live.

"Closed, prayer by Peter Whitmer, Jr.,

John Whitmer, Clerk." \*

(\*Nothing of particular interest to the main issue involving the publication of the Book of Commandments occurred in this November 9, 1831, conference, except that it shows that Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer were all three still in Hiram, Ohio. The succeeding special conference of November 11th was of similar nature, pertain-

ing to the duties of the elders and some ordinations. It will be noted that John Whitmer did not attend this November 11th conference, but was present on the 12th. We now give you the minutes of this special conference. (C. L. W.)

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"Minutes of a special conference held in Hiram, Portage County, Ohio, November 11, 1831.

Present:

<b>Joseph Smith, Jr.,</b>	Reynolds Cahoon,
<b>Oliver Cowdery,</b>	William E. McLellan
Peter Whitmer, Jr.,	Luke Johnson
Sidney Rigdon,	Lyman Johnson.

"Opened, prayer by Brother Reynolds Cahoon, who then said that the question which he wanted settled was whether it was the will of the Lord that he should go to Zion in the Spring. Commandments concerning the duties of the Elders, read by Brother Oliver Cowdery.

"Voted that it is the mind of the conference that our Brother Reynolds is not yet commanded to go to Zion in the spring by anything yet written: Therefore, voted that our Brother Reynolds be not sent up to Zion in the coming spring.

"Commandment to Brother Thomas B. Marsh read.

"Brother Harvey D. Redfield ordained a priest under the hand of Sidney Rigdon.

"Closed. (Oliver Cowdery, Clerk of the Conference.)"

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(We now come to the final and most interesting conference of these "four special conferences," which have caused so much controversy. It is of interest to note that the Clerk of these conferences was specific and clear in going into detail as to the time and place they were held. These minutes should forever lay at rest the argument as to just how many conferences were held at Hiram, Ohio, during

this period, and as to how many were held somewhere else, as alleged by the Reorganized Church; also as to who was present at each one which considered the preparation and reviewing of the revelations that were to go into the Book of Commandments. One thing in particular that these meetings reveal is that Joseph Smith, Jr., was constantly in Hiram, Ohio, from November 1 to 12, 1831, and attended every conference session, and to this date not one of the proponents of "three conferences somewhere else," during this period has ever produced one scintilla of evidence to show him present at any other conference away from Hiram, or as to the nature of the business that was supposed to have been transacted, nor can they, for such alleged conferences "somewhere else," were non-existent. We now give you the minutes of the last of this series of special conferences. (C.L.W.)

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"Minutes of a special conference held in Hiram, Portage County, Ohio, November 12, 1831.

Present:

<b>Joseph Smith, Jr.,</b>	Peter Whitmer, Jr.,
<b>Oliver Cowdery,</b>	Sidney Rigdon,
David Whitmer,	Reynolds Cahoon,
<b>John Whitmer,</b>	William E. McLellin
Luke Johnson,	

"Brother William E. McLellin was appointed Moderator and Oliver Cowdery, Clerk.

"Prayer by the Moderator.

"Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., said one item he wished acted upon was that our brethren Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer and the sacred writings which they have entrusted to them to carry to Zion be dedicated to the Lord by the prayer of faith. (See Footnote 7.)

"Secondly, Brother Oliver Cowdery has labored with me from the beginning, in writing, etc., Brother Martin has



labored with me from the beginning, and Brothers John and Sidney also for a considerable time, and as these sacred writings are now going to the church for their benefit, that we may have claim on the church for recompense, if this conference think these things worth prizing to be had on record to show hereafter, I feel that it will be according to the mind of the Spirit for by it these things were put into my heart, which I know to be the Spirit of truth, etc.

"Voted that Joseph Smith, Jr., be appointed to dedicate and consecrate these brethren and the sacred writings and all they have entrusted to their care, to the Lord; Done accordingly. (See Footnote 8.)

"After deliberate consideration in consequence of the Book of Revelation now to be printed, being the foundation of the church and the salvation of the world and the keys of the mysteries of the kingdom, and the riches of Eternity to the Church—

"Voted that they be prized by this conference to be worth to the Church the riches of the whole earth, speaking temporally. (See Footnote 9.)

"Voted that in consequence of the diligence of our brethren Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer and Sidney Rigdon in bringing to light by the grace of God these sacred things, be appointed to manage them according to the laws of the church and the commandments of the Lord. (Footnote 10.)

"And also that in consequence of the families of Joseph Smith, Hyrum Smith, Peter Whitmer, Christian Whitmer, Jacob Whitmer, Hiram Page and David Whitmer in administering to their wants in temporal things and also the labors of Samuel H. Smith, Peter Whitmer, Jr., William Smith and Don Carlos Smith. Voted by this conference that the above named brethren be remembered to the Bishop in Zion as being worthy of inheritances among the people of the Lord according to the laws of said church.

\*"Closed, prayer by Brother John Whitmer.

Oliver Cowdery, clerk."

(\* The minutes thus given from November 1-12, 1831, are to be found in the Far West Record at Salt Lake City, Utah, pages 16 to 23.)

This concludes the minutes of these four special conferences, over which there has been so much controversy. The more we study them the more apparent it becomes to us that more sober consideration should be given to the work that was thus accomplished by the early elders of the Church of Christ, for they prized the revelations contained in the Book of Commandments more than earthly possessions and as the foundation of the church.

As the direct continuation of that church, this Church of Christ holds to the belief that if all believers of the Restoration would give more prayerful consideration to the need of returning to the truths of the Book of Commandments and would reject the innovations of the Doctrine and Covenants, that as a great religious movement of these last days we would be more of a force for good and inspiration toward preparing a people for the coming of the Lord.

#### Footnotes

Note 1. This Preface, received by revelation, was published as chapter 1, of the first edition of the Book of Commandments, from which the following is quoted:

"Behold, this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants, and my Preface unto the Book of my Commandments, which I have given them to publish unto you, O inhabitants of the earth." (Bk. of Com. Chap. 1:2.)

This preface was given on November 1, 1831, at the close of the first session of this first special conference, of which there were three sessions. It specifically authorized the church to publish these revelations as the "Book of my Commandments," which Joseph Smith, Jr., had compiled, with the help of John Whitmer and others and brought to the conference in manuscript form. Later a committee, composed of Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams "carefully selected from the revelations of God and compiled" the "Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints." In this later work the revelations taken from the Book of Commandments and Evening and Morning Star, were so altered and mutilated that in some instances it was almost

impossible to recognize them. Yet, they dared to attach the Preface of the Book of Commandments, given of the Lord, to their pretentious work, as published in 1835. It is no wonder, then, that the Lord said in September 1832, "your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief."

Note 2. From this part of the minutes we observe that the "brethren arose and said they were willing to testify to the world that they knew that they (the revelations in the Book of Commandments) were of the Lord. Among the elders present at this special conference, according to the minutes, was David Whitmer, who said, "These revelations were arranged for publication by Brothers Joseph Smith, Sydney Rigdon, Orson Hyde and others in Hiram, Ohio, while I was there, were sent to Independence to be published, and were printed just exactly as they were arranged by Brother Joseph and the others." Address page 56. He was one of those at the time (afternoon session of November 1, 1831,) who arose "and said they were willing to testify to the world that they knew that they were of the Lord."

Note 3. In this afternoon session of November 1, 1831, we note that after the elders had signified a willingness to bear witness to the truth of the revelations contained in the Book of Commandments, the following statement is found, "Revelation relative to same."

This had reference to a revelation afterward published in the Doctrine and Covenants as Section 67, from which we quote in part:

"And now, I, the Lord give unto you a testimony of the truth of these commandments **which are lying before you**; your eyes have been upon my servant Joseph Smith, Jr., and his language you have known, and his imperfections you have known; and ye have sought in your hearts knowledge, that you might express beyond his language; this you also know; now seek ye out of the Book of Commandments, even the least that is among them, and appoint him 'hat is the most wise among you; or if there be any among you that shall make one like unto it, then are ye justified in saying that ye do not know that they are true; but if ye cannot make one like unto it, ye are under condemnation if ye do not bear record that they are true; for ye know that there is no unrighteousness in them; and that which is righteous cometh down from above, from the Father of lights."—D. & C. 67:2.

From this we learn that "these commandments which are lying before you," was the manuscript that Joseph Smith and John Whitmer had begun to prepare in the Summer of 1830. During this same conference of November 1, 1831, (afternoon session,) after discussing the preface that had been given by revelation, "some conversation was had concerning revelations and language," and the above revelation was given, Joseph Smith, Jr., relates the following:

"After the foregoing (revelation) was received, William E. McLellin as the wisest man, in his own estimation, having more learning than sense, endeavored to write a commandment like unto one of the least of the Lord's but failed; it was an awful responsibility to write in the name of the Lord. The Elders and all present that witnessed this vain attempt of a man to imitate the language of Jesus Christ, renewed their faith in the fulness of the Gospel, and in the truth of the commandments and revelations which the Lord had given to the Church through my instrumentality; and the Elders signified a willingness to bear testimony of their truth to all the world." —Ut. Ch. Hist. Vol. 1, page 226.

After the above experience, and demonstration of the foolishness of men to imitate the work of God, Joseph stated that he received the following testimony of the witnesses of the Book of Commandments by revelation:

"The testimony of the witnesses to the book of the Lord's commandments, which He gave to His church through Joseph Smith, Jr., who was appointed by the voice of the Church for this purpose; we therefore feel willing to bear testimony to all the world of mankind, to every creature upon the face of all the earth and upon the islands of the sea, that the Lord has borne record to our souls, through the Holy Ghost, shed forth upon us, that the commandments were given by inspiration of God, and are profitable for all men, and are verily true. We give this testimony unto the world, the Lord being our helper; and it is through the grace of God, the Father, and His Son, Jesus Christ, that we are permitted to have this privilege of bearing this testimony unto the world, that the children of men may be profited thereby." Utah Ch. Hist., Vol. 1, page 226.

The Elders present and witnessing as above were,	
Joseph Smith, Jr.,	Sidney Rigdon,
Oliver Cowdery,	William E. McLellin
David Whitmer,	Orson Hyde,
John Whitmer,	Luke Johnson,
Peter Whitmer, Jr.	Lyman Johnson,

Among these elders we find some who were the witnesses to the Book of Mormon also. Footnote to the above "testimony" prepared by the Historian of the Utah Church is given herewith:

"This 'Testimony' to the truth of the Book of Commandments was doubtless drawn up with the intention of having it signed by the elders present at the conference; but whether that was done or not does not appear in the Mss. of the Prophet's History. The testimony itself however, is in the Mss. History. This is remarked because it has not been published heretofore in the History of the Prophet. The matter appears to stand thus; each of the Elders present at the conference testified to the truth of the revelations then about to be published; and, as already seen, expressed a wil-

lingness to testify to the truth of the revelations to all the world. Accordingly this testimony was prepared with the intention of having it signed and published in the "Book of Commandments." Ut. Ch. Hist., Vol 1, page 226.

At a later date, this testimony of the elders in 1831 was ascribed to the Twelve who were not called until February 1835, and published as their testimony, as recorded on page 256 of the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Thus again we see manifested the cunning craftiness of men, who had designs to overthrow the church and destroy it, not only by plagiarizing the Preface to the Book of Commandments, but by ascribing to the Twelve appointed several years later the testimony which the elders had given to the revelations in the manuscript Book of Commandments before them, which was witnessed by the Holy Ghost, shed forth upon them.

When the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints was under consideration, in the assembly of August 17, 1835, neither the Twelve, nor Joseph Smith, Jr., nor Frederick G. Williams were present at this General Assembly, for they had gone to Michigan. (See the Return, June 1889, Ebenezer Robinson.)

Apostle William E. McLellin had this to say concerning the so-called testimony of the Twelve being present at this General Assembly in 1835:

"So far as the testimony of the Twelve published in that Book (1835 Doc. and Cov.) is concerned it was a **base forgery**. The twelve left Kirtland in May, proceeding on an eastern tour. They held their last conference in Farmington, Maine, October 24, 1835. So their testimony could not in truth be in that Assembly in September 24th 1835." Saints' Herald, August 1, 1872.

The base forgery thus referred to by Wm. E. McLellin had reference to the purported testimony of the Twelve as found in the Reorganized Church's Doctrine and Covenants, Sec. 108a, par. 5, which by comparison with the testimony borne by the Elders in the adjourned session of the Special Conference of November 1, 1831, is shown to be a plagiarism. Wm. McLellin was present at this special conference, and had attempted to imitate one of the revelations, (as he was evidently skeptical of their divinity,) and miserably failed as shown later. Therefore he knew from personal knowledge that his charge of "base forgery" was true, and from preponderance of historical facts reviewed, we agree that it was. The Doctrine and Covenants of the Latter Day Saints contained sufficient element of truth, mingled with error as introduced in the mutilations and alterations to the revelations which had been purloined from the Book of Commandments, to deceive the very elect, if possible, and the result has been a divided, weakened Restoration church ever since. Many left the church as the result of these

changes, in the early days, as attested by David Whitmer, "I want to tell the brethren that when the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was published, and presented to the church assembly in Kirtland, Ohio, in August, 1835, as recorded in the old church papers, a very few of the brethren then knew about most of the important changes that had been put in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants. IN TIME IT WAS GENERALLY FOUND OUT, AND THE RESULT WAS THAT SOME OF THE MEMBERS LEFT THE CHURCH ON ACCOUNT OF IT." Address to all Believers, page 61.

In addition to this testimony of McLellin and David Whitmer, we again quote from Whitmer, who was also present and an eyewitness:

"I consider the Book of Doctrine and Covenants a creed of religious faith. You can see from the first edition (Kirtland 1835) that men, on the authority of other men, and no authority from God, 'arranged the items of the doctrine of Jesus Christ' in that book, and in August, 1835, adopted it as the doctrine and covenants of their faith by unanimous vote of the high council, thus making it a law to the church for the first time. To these proceedings I objected from the first, as I also did to the changing the name of the church." An Address To All Believers in Christ, page 51.

The passing years have proved the soundness of these men's conclusions. The Doctrine and Covenants has led us down many blind trails, where the true purpose of the Restoration has been forgotten. May we return to the old path before it becomes too late.

Note 4. We note that this first Special Conference was composed of three sessions, the morning and afternoon of November 1, and the morning session of November 2, 1831. In this last session the revelation, (D. & C. 67,) was read, and then the Elders arose in turn and bore their testimony to the truthfulness of the Book of Commandments. By this act they placed their endorsement upon it as being inspired of God, to be part of the teachings of the church. Thus closed the first of the four Special Conferences held in Hiram, Ohio.

Note 5. It will be noted that these revelations were then and there before them in manuscript form, the same as copy for any other publication, being considered by the conference with the view of having them reviewed and prepared for the printer. There was not a better qualified person there in that conference than was Joseph Smith, Jr., therefore he was chosen by the conference as the most logical to review them for publication just as he said in his History that he did do. This was done with the view of correcting errors made by the scribes, and disproves the allegation that so-called mistakes in the first edition of the Book of Commandments were the result of tampering by some of the elders, and it is a safe presumption that this manuscript never left

the custody of Joseph Smith, Jr., until after it was set apart by blessing in a subsequent meeting and turned over to Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer. By this resolution, adopted by this second special conference there in Hiram, the elders placed the full responsibility of "reviewing the revelations and commandments," etc., squarely upon the shoulders of Joseph Smith. This act is in full accord with the statement of the prophet as published in the Utah Church History, Vol. 1, page 235, which said, "My time was occupied closely in **reviewing** the commandments," etc., and not in harmony with the position taken by the Historian of the Reorganized Church, Reorg. Ch. Hist., Vol. 1, page 229, who states that he said "my time was occupied closely in **receiving**, etc.," which their representatives have made a play on to prove that because of thus "receiving" so many revelations he did not personally have time to review and arrange them as claimed by David Whitmer and others. This proves further, that the efforts of these same representatives to lay the blame on the elders in Hiram for the alleged changes erroneously claimed by them to be in the Book of Commandments, is without foundation. That Joseph Smith, Jr., fully appreciated the responsibility thus placed upon him by the special conference of November 8, 1831, is very apparent, for even after the Book of Commandments, first edition, was printed at Independence and forwarded to him at Kirtland prior to June 25, 1833, he **reviewed** it again, and in a letter to W. W. Phelps of that date said:

"We have found the following errors in the Commandments **as printed**; fortieth chapter, tenth verse, third line, instead of 'corruptible,' put corrupted, Fourteenth verse of the same chapter, fifth line, instead of 'respector to persons,' put respector of persons. Twenty-first verse, second line of the same chapter instead of 'respector' to 'put respector of.' Forty-fourth chapter, twelfth verse, last line, instead of 'hands' put 'heads.' " Ut. Ch. Hist., Vol. 1, page 364.

From this we are justified in the conclusion that otherwise the Book of Commandments was correct and in harmony with the manuscript Joseph Smith had "reviewed and arranged" in Hiram, Ohio, during the fore part of November 1831. It will further be borne in mind that he made the above "typographical" corrections by June 25, 1833, at Kirtland, over three weeks before the mob destroyed the press on July 20, 1833. David Whitmer had said, "Early in the Spring of 1833, at Independence, Mo., the revelations were printed in the Book of Commandments. Many of the books were finished and distributed among the members of the church," etc. Address page 55. Under these circumstances it is possible that a second edition was in the press at the time the mob raided the printing plant. A comparison of several of the Title pages of reputed original copies of the work would certainly indicate that to be true.

Note 6. This second resolution of the conference positively restricted Oliver Cowdery to his work of Editor of the Star, and prohibited him from tampering in any way with the "revelations and commandments by the Spirit of the Lord." It shows beyond cavil that the Elders of the early Church of Christ present in that conference, including Joseph Smith, understood that the provision of the revelation (D. & C. 57:5,) provided for Oliver Cowdery to assist W. W. Phelps "to copy, and correct, and select," etc., but did not apply to the material that was to go into the Book of Commandments. This special work of arranging, reviewing and correcting the revelations in the Book of Commandments was the sole responsibility of Joseph Smith, placed upon him by conference resolution as above set forth.

Note 7. From this statement of Joseph Smith, Jr., we learn that along with himself, both John Whitmer and Oliver Cowdery were still in Hiram, Ohio, and in attendance at these four special conferences, up to and including November 12, 1831, and that John Whitmer erred when he stated in his manuscript History quoted by Apostle Curtis in the De Kalb Debate and his "Our Beliefs Defended," that he had left on the 10th of November. This being true then Joseph Smith, Jr., had ample time to review and arrange these revelations for publication according to the instructions of the conference. He was so much concerned about their preservation and safety that in this last conference he was desirous of dedicating and consecrating both the manuscript and those who were to carry it to Missouri.

Note 8. This resolution gives us conclusive proof that the "sacred writings," referring to the Book of Commandments, were at hand during these entire conference sessions and under the personal care and supervision of Joseph Smith, Jr., himself, else how could the dedication and consecration thereof be "done accordingly," as these minutes show was done.

Note 9. Here we find that the conference gave the revelations as published in the Book of Commandments "deliberate consideration;" that they considered them to be "the foundation of the church," the "salvation of the world," the "keys of the mysteries of the kingdom" and worth the "riches of eternity to the church," yet we find them so blind that they will use every device and subterfuge to thwart the will of God expressed in these revelations, in order to uphold and put forth the spurious revelations found in the Doctrine and Covenants. It will be a happy day for the Restoration when a joint committee can go through these two books, select the genuine from the false and mutilated revelations and combine the truth together into the true Book of Commandments, and then tell a straightforward story to the world as to the actual circumstances that surrounded the false revelations found



in the Doctrine and Covenants.

Note 10. According to the provisions of this resolution, Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer and Sidney Rigdon were appointed to "manage" the business details of printing the Book of Commandments, but not authorized to tamper with the contents of the book itself. Later this committee was enlarged by revelation (D. & C. 70:1) to include Martin Harris and W. W. Phelps.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

**Blame Placed Upon the Scribes of Joseph Smith, Jr., for Alleged Mistakes in the Book of Commandments Not Justified**

From the information set forth in the last chapter, it will be observed that the claims made by representatives of the Reorganized Church, to show that Joseph Smith, Jr., was only present in Hiram, Ohio, for one conference, and somewhere else in the interim, are not supported in the minutes of these conferences as preserved in the Far West Record. A review of the minutes of each of these special conferences shows that Joseph Smith, Jr., was present and participated in the deliberations thereof, at Hiram, on these dates, November 1, 2, 8, 9, 11, and 12, 1831, six days out of the twelve. Oliver Cowdery was also present on the same dates, and John Whitmer also with the exception of November 11th. Therefore the evidence is conclusive that Whitmer and Cowdery **did not** leave Hiram, Ohio, for Missouri until after the 12th instead of the 10th as has been alleged.

The minutes from the Far West Record also reveal that these revelations had been preserved in manuscript form from the beginning of the work of establishing the Church of Christ in these last days, and had been compiled by Joseph Smith, Jr., assisted by John Whitmer, Oliver Cowdery and others prior to these Special Conferences, for they, (the revelations compiled in manuscript form,) were referred to as a "Book" in both the minutes and the revelations, (D. & C. 67.)

We now give you an example of some of the arguments used to discredit this view. For instance, "It is quite possible that they were gathered together in a book or in some other appropriate form, **although there is no direct evidence to that effect.**" as stated by Apostle F. Henry Edwards of the Reorganized Church, in the Gospel Quarterly, Vol. 8, No. 1, page 34.

When Apostle Edwards said there is "no evidence to

that effect," he erred, for by referring back to the conference minutes of November 8, 1831, it will be noted that Sidney Rigdon called attention to the fact that there were "possible errors or mistakes \* \* \* in the commandments or revelations \* \* \* made by the scribes." To rectify such mistakes and assure the revelations being correctly printed in the Book of Commandments, this conference directed Joseph Smith, Jr., who was present "to correct those errors or mistakes" while reviewing them for publication. The question arises, How could he correct "errors or mistakes" in a document that was allegedly non-existent? During the session of the Special Conference on November 2nd, a revelation, (D. & C. 67,) was received which said, **"these commandments are lying before you,"** and there was no other way for them to be "lying before" them except as they were compiled in manuscript form, just as they were to be presented to the printers. When Walter W. Smith was Historian of the Reorganized Church, he wrote an article, "The Doctrine and Covenants; Its Contents and Publication," in which he stated "During the early days of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, a record was kept containing the revelations of God to the Church, intended for the government thereof, or the direction of the ministry. These were kept by Oliver Cowdery, and later by John Whitmer, **in a manuscript book sometimes called 'The Book of Commandments,'** or 'The Book of the Law of the Lord.' From this record, copies of the revelations were made by various church officers or ministers from time to time, as there might be need for them in their work or ministry, when laboring where appeal could not be made to **the original record.**" Journal of History, Vol. 14, page 129.

We believe that Walter W. Smith in this instance, at least, was more nearly right in his conclusions than was Apostle Edwards, for the conference minutes under consideration clearly show that the Book of Commandments was at hand in a tangible manuscript form referred to as a book.

Under these circumstances we should hesitate before

we further impugn the work thus done, for we are not justified in charging these earnest elders with carelessness in their work, nor with ulterior motives, by accusing them of tampering with the manuscript which Joseph Smith had personally prepared, reviewed, arranged, and by prayer blessed and consecrated to the service of God and the Church. A better excuse is needed than that of Joseph's being "somewhere else" holding conferences away from Hiram, Ohio, while these elders were allegedly conniving to mutilate and alter the revelations, as leaders of the Reorganized Church have claimed.

No where do we find recorded the painstaking effort and devotion put forth in 1834 and 1835 in the preparation of the Doctrine and Covenants before it appeared as a printed book in the Assembly of August 17, 1835, as was put forth in the preparation of the Book of Commandments. And it must be borne in mind that that assembly acted on the Doctrine and Covenants in the absence of both Joseph Smith and the Counsel of Twelve Apostles. Here was more of an opportunity for skulduggery than ever arose at Hiram, and it is the candid opinion of the authors that it was a case of "when the cat's away, the mice will play," while Joseph and other leading men were away.

In connection with this observation, we give you the statement of Ebenezer Robinson, in his "Items of Personal History of the Editor," in the Return, relative to the acceptance of the Doctrine and Covenants at the General Assembly of August 17, 1835. He states:

"We attended that meeting, and noticed that a majority of those voting did so upon the testimony of those who bore record to the truth of the book. AS THEY HAD NEITHER TIME NOR OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE IT FOR THEMSELVES, THEY HAD NO MEANS OF KNOWING WHETHER ANY ALTERATIONS HAD BEEN MADE IN ANY OF THE REVELATIONS OR NOT.

"Neither Joseph Smith, Jr., nor Frederick G. Williams were present at this general assembly, as they had gone to Michigan." Return, page 89.

And in this connection we wish to give the statement of a man who was in sympathy with the alterations that were made. He was Orson Pratt, apostle and first editor of the Millennial Star. He said:

"The revelation called Section 2, (1835, Ed., also Sec. 17, of the Reorganized Church Doctrine and Covenants,) was not all revealed in 1830. The 16th and 17th paragraphs of this section, relating to some of the higher councils of the Priesthood, **were given several years after the rise of the Church.** . . . Hence, paragraphs taken from revelations of later dates are, in a few instances, incorporated with those of an earlier date. Indeed, at the time of compilation, the prophet was inspired in several instances to write additional sentences and paragraphs to the earlier revelations. In this manner the Lord did truly give line upon line, here a little and there a little." Mil. Star, Vol. 19, page 260. (Quoted from page 7, "Changes of the Revelations," by DAN Mcgregor.)

And that, dear reader, is the most frank, plausible, and straightforward explanation of these changes and alterations that has ever come from the pen of any of the early writers of the church. This fully confirms the charges of David Whitmer, Wm. McLellin and others who were "eye witnesses."

From what has been brought forth before in this chapter, we can see that considerable effort has been made to throw the blame for the many differences we find in the texts of the revelations as published in the Book of Commandments and later in the Doctrine and Covenants, upon the shoulders of the scribes who assisted Joseph Smith, Jr., in preparing the manuscript which was considered by these conferences. As stated before, some have asserted that John Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon, Oliver Cowdery and others altered these revelations and sent them to Missouri while Joseph Smith was away from Hiram holding some alleged conferences somewhere else. (See J. F. Curtis, in "Our Beliefs Defended," page 6 to 26.) If the position thus taken had been correct, then the work of these men in preparing the

material for the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, would likewise be subject to the same suspicion, for if these men had willfully altered and mutilated the revelations in the one instance, then what assurance could we have that they did not do the same thing with regards to the Doctrine and Covenants? It is a truism, that a man who willfully commits an act of wrong doing once, lays himself open to suspicion that he may do the same thing again under similar circumstances. The statement above quoted from Orson Pratt, explodes such charges as Curtis and his colleagues have made. For our part we are not willing to take the position that the revelations as printed in the Book of Commandments were altered by these men in 1831 in any such way as they claim. By such erroneous charges, the Reorganized church would have us believe that 1700 changes and alterations appearing in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants were necessary to make the revelations agree with the original manuscript before they were allegedly changed by the committee who printed the Book of Commandments. Yet we find that Joseph Smith prepared this manuscript himself, and personally arranged and reviewed it by order of conference resolution, and then when the first edition was off the press prior to June 25, 1833, he reviewed it again and found only four typographical errors in it.

Going back to a consideration of the manner in which the revelations were preserved and prepared in manuscript form we call attention to the following from the pen of Joseph Smith, Jr., concerning events that transpired about August, 1830:

"Shortly after we had received the above revelations (Bk. of Com. Chapters 27, 28, and 29,) Oliver Cowdery returned to Mr. Whitmer's and I BEGAN TO ARRANGE AND COPY THE REVELATIONS WHICH WE HAD RECEIVED FROM TIME TO TIME, in which I was assisted by John Whitmer who now resided with me." Mil. Star, Vol. 14, page 36, the Supplement.

This shows that Joseph Smith, Jr., personally supervised

this work of compiling the revelations for future publication as before stated. In this work he was "assisted" by John Whitmer who was one of his scribes. David Whitmer stated that "these revelations were arranged by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Orson Hyde and others," etc., which statement Apostle Curtis attempted to use in support of his allegations that they changed and altered the manuscript from which the Book of Commandments was printed. Such an argument is far fetched and made out of whole cloth, for Joseph said in his history that he "arranged and copied" them himself, at first assisted by John Whitmer, and evidently later by others who acted as scribes at his dictation in an extension of this compilation.

It is quite evident also that Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer and others who acted as scribes for Joseph Smith, Jr., understood their relationship to him in their work, for in the minutes of the Special Conference held at Hiram, Ohio, November 8, 1831, Rigdon brought up the question of possible errors in the transcribing of these revelations. His anxiety for their correctness was very apparent, as he realized that it was possible for mistakes to have been made under the circumstances which should have been corrected before being submitted to the printers for publication. We call your attention to this statement by Rigdon to that conference, "Remarks by Brother Sidney Rigdon on the errors or the mistakes which are in the commandments and revelations made either by the translation in consequence of the slow way of the scribes at the time of receiving or by the scribes themselves." — *Far West Record*.

This action on the part of Sidney Rigdon, who was one of the scribes, in thus bringing the matter before the conference, absolves him from any charge of intentional wrong doing, at this time at least, or a desire to fix the revelations according to his personal ideas. It was the act of an honest man to insist that the conference should have his work reviewed before it was printed. The logic of his remarks evidently appealed to the conference, for provision was made immediately for Joseph Smith, Jr., to take this responsibility,

as the best qualified of them all, for it was through him, as the servant of the Lord, that these revelations and commandments had been received, as the following resolution shows:

"Resolved by this conference that Brother Joseph Smith, Jr., CORRECT THOSE ERRORS OR MISTAKES WHICH HE MAY DISCOVER BY THE HOLY SPIRIT WHILE REVIEWING THE REVELATIONS AND COMMANDMENTS, and also the fulness of the scriptures." —Far West Record.

While we are considering the work of the scribes, we give you the testimony of Parley P. Pratt, as to the manner in which these revelations were dictated to the scribes by the Prophet:

"\* \* \* \* \* Each sentence was uttered slowly and very distinctly, and with a pause between each, sufficiently long for it to be recorded by an ordinary writer in long hand. This was the manner in which all his written revelations were dictated and written. There was never any hesitation, reviewing or reading back, in order to keep the run of the subject; neither did any of these communications undergo revisions, interlinings or corrections. As he dictated them so they stood, so far as I have witnessed, and I was present to witness the dictation of several communications of several pages each." Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, page 65-6, taken from Utah Church History Vol. 1, page 173.

The historian of the Reorganized Church, Heman C. Smith, corroborates the evidence that Joseph Smith alone was authorized to correct any errors or mistakes appearing in the manuscript, for he said:

**"It was decided by the conference that Joseph Smith should arrange and get in readiness the revelations, and that Oliver Cowdery should carry them to Independence, Missouri, where W. W. Phelps had gone with a printing office, and have them published."** Reorg. Ch. Hist., Vol. 1, page 225.

Under these circumstances we should all be ready to concede the fact that Joseph Smith, and he alone arranged and prepared the manuscript for the Book of Commandments for publication. All the evidence points to the fact



that when the alterations, mutilations and additions were made in the revelations as they appeared in the Kirtland Reprint of the Evening and Morning Star and the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, they were made by the committee who compiled the Doctrine and Covenants. And for these changes the blame was laid on Sidney Rigdon by Oliver Cowdery, as set forth by David Whitmer, who said:

"I want to state also that Oliver Cowdery told me that Rigdon was the cause of those changes being made; (In the 1835 edition,) by smooth talk he convinced Joseph, Oliver and F. G. Williams that it was alright. Oliver told me that he had sorely repented of that thing and he repented of the other errors he had been led into by Rigdon and others." Saints' Herald, Vol. 34, page 93, quoted in "Changes of the Revelations" by Dan McGregor, page 7.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

**The Preface to the First Edition of the Book of Commandments Precludes Revelations after November 1, 1831.**

In the minutes of the Special Conference held at Hiram, Ohio, November 1, 1831, we find that the Preface to the Book of Commandments was received by revelation. In as much as the preface to a book is considered the last thing to be written, so as to include in it a brief summary of the contents of the book it reviews, as an introduction by its author, it is only logical to conclude that the Lord, whom we believe to be the author of the contents of the Book of Commandments, intended that only such revelations as had been received and authorized by him up to and including that Preface, were to be published in this first edition. By this act we are justified in taking the position that God intended to preclude all of the revelations from that edition except those "lying before" them (D. & C. 67:2) in manuscript form.

Some however, hold to a different conclusion, and take just as firm a position that as the result of a committee being appointed, composed of Joseph Smith, Jr., Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon and W. W. Phelps, to have a stewardship over the revelations given from time to time, (D. & C. Sec. 70:.) that the responsibility rested upon them to publish all the revelations given up to the time the Book of Commandments went to press. Among this group we find Apostle J. F. Curtis of the Reorganized Church, who set forth his position as follows:

"The committee appointed to publish the revelations, as stated in Section 70 of the Doctrine and Covenants was commanded to publish 'the revelations and commandments which I have given unto them and which I shall hereafter give unto them.' (Doctrine and Covenants 70:1.)

"The revelation appointing the committee is dated November 1831. The committee was to publish the revelations prior to this time, and after this time, but the last chapter

in the Book of Commandments is dated September 1831. At the time the mob destroyed the press, the committee had not yet published all the revelations up to November, 1831, and had published none of the revelations given future to that time, with the exception of the preface which was dated November, 1831. Yet they were commanded positively to publish the revelations 'which I shall hereafter give unto them.' Neither the revelations given after September 1831, nor the revelations given in the year 1832, nor yet the revelations given up to July, 1833, when the mob destroyed the press were published in the Book of Commandments: yet a number of these revelations were published in the Evening and Morning Star, showing that they were in the hands of the committee, though not included in the Book of Commandments," ect., etc. *Our Beliefs Defended* page 10-11.

An examination of the position here taken brings out the fact that Mr. Curtis applied his deductions to the wrong committee. By referring to the minutes of the Special Conference held at Hiram, Ohio, on November 12, 1831, we learn that the material for the Book of Commandments, including the Prefatory revelation of November 1, 1831, was all arranged, reviewed, "dedicated and consecrated," as a complete book by Joseph Smith, by order of the conference, and placed in the hands of Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, who were also blessed and consecrated to the Lord for the safe delivery of that Book to the printers in Missouri. At no time do we find the work thus entrusted to these two men given over to another committee. We do find, however, that another committee with entirely different duties, was provided for in the conference of November 12, 1831. It was:

"Voted that in consequence of the diligence of our brethren Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer and Sidney Rigdon, in bringing to light by the grace of God these sacred things, BE APPOINTED TO MANAGE THEM ACCORDING TO THE LAWS OF THE CHURCH AND THE COMMANDMENTS OF THE LORD."

Oliver Cowdery prior to this time had been appointed to "select" from the revelations those that were to go into

the Star, or press, but this committee of three were to "manage" not "edit"; therefore it was the business part of getting them printed which they were entrusted with. By reading Section 70 of the Doctrine and Covenants, we see this committee increased from three to seven, to be composed of Joseph Smith, Jr., Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, John Whitmer, Sidney Rigdon and William W. Phelps, "to be stewards over the revelations and commandments which I have given unto them, and which I shall hereafter give unto them" and not one word, as alleged by Apostle Curtis, was given instructing them to "publish the revelations, 'which I shall hereafter give unto them,'" etc., etc. This committee was to manage the temporal, business part of publishing the revelations, but not one word in that whole revelation (D. & C. 70,) authorized them to publish, correct or review the revelations before publishing them in either the Book of Commandments or the Evening and Morning Star. They were stewards, men appointed to manage the temporal aspects or financial arrangements as stated, "I, the Lord, have appointed them and ordained them to be stewards over the revelations and commandments which I have given unto them, and which I shall hereafter give unto them; and an account of this stewardship will I require of them in the day of judgment; wherefore I have appointed unto them, **and this is their business in the church of God, to manage them and the concerns thereof; yea, the benefits thereof,**" etc., (D. C. 70:1).

Thus not one word is here given to warrant the assumption that this committee was to edit or prepare the material for the printer nor that they should determine what was or was not to be printed to go to the world. The next paragraph, (D. C. 70:2,) shows that theirs was a temporal stewardship only, for it says, "they shall not give these things unto the church, neither unto the world; nevertheless inasmuch as they receive more than is needful for their necessities and their wants, it shall be given into my storehouse, and the benefits shall be consecrated unto the inhabitants of Zion," etc.

In the statement quoted from "Our Beliefs Defended" Apostle Curtis admitted that none of the revelations given after November 1, 1831, were published in the Book of Commandments, and "yet a number of these revelations were published in the Evening and Morning Star showing that they were in the hands of the committee, though not included in the Book of Commandments." We are made to ask, "What committee?" The point is that Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, both members of the committee "appointed and ordained stewards," were both well aware of the fact that the manuscript for the Book of Commandments had been "reviewed" and corrected for "errors made by the scribes," by Joseph Smith, himself, and that it had been endorsed, dedicated and approved as a book, complete in every sense such an endorsement carries even to a Preface, by the November 12, 1831 conference and entrusted to Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer who were to take them to Missouri for publication.

In July 1831, a revelation was received at Independence, Missouri, (D. C. 57), which made the following provisions:

"Let my servant W. W. Phelps be planted in this place, and be established as a printer unto the church; and lo, if the world receiveth his writings (behold here is wisdom,) let him obtain whatever he can in righteousness, for the good of the saints, and let my servant Oliver Cowdery assist him even as I have commanded, in whatsoever place I shall appoint unto him, to copy, and to correct and select, that all things may be right before me," etc. (D. C. 57:5.)

By comparing the instruction thus given in July, 1831, with the action taken by the conference of November 8th we find that Oliver Cowdery, and not the committee of stewards (70:1,) was the one to make the selection of such of the materials as should appear in the Star, as well as being a member of this board of stewards. This was the action taken:

"Resolved by this conference that Brother Oliver Cowdery shall, (copy, correct and select,) all the writings which

shall go forth to the world through the printing press, (EXCEPT THE REVELATIONS AND COMMANDMENTS BY THE SPIRIT OF THE LORD) and this according to the commandment given in Missouri, July 20, 1831."

The question arises, Were these provisions inspired of God? If so, then are we to be led to believe by these brethren of the Reorganized Church that He was so uncertain as to how to proceed that he had to change his mind several times on so important a matter? For our part we believe that God gave a very definite plan for them to work to, and we have no right to confuse the work of Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps, as editors, with the work of the seven stewards who were to manage the business of printing them. The point that the "committee (70:1) had not yet published all the revelations up to November 1, 1831," is not well taken, for Apostle Curtis and his colleagues have overlooked the fact that there were good and sufficient reasons for not publishing "all the revelations" at that time in the Book of Commandments, or in the Star either, for those men, in 1831, had received this specific instruction of the Lord concerning the matter:

"Keep these things from going abroad unto the world, until it is expedient in me, that ye may accomplish this work in the eyes of the people and the eyes of your enemies, that they may not know your works until ye have accomplished the thing which I have commanded you." Bk. of Com. 48:68, D. C. 45:15, given in March, 1831.

At the time the church provided for the printing office in Missouri, there was no press west of the Mississippi River, and they were contemplating establishing the church in hostile territory. Consequently, it was the wisdom of the Lord that the press should be set up before the revelations providing for it should be published to the world. Among those revelations given prior to November 1831, was Section 57, which in addition to providing for the editorship of the Star also designated Independence, as the center place. It is evident that to have printed this revelation either in the Star or Commandments would have resulted in persecu-

tion of the church.

It is clear from these facts that the position taken by Apostle J. F. Curtis and others on this phase of our controversy is untenable. For if we accept the arguments thus made, then we place the Lord in the position of endorsing for publication, through this Preface, not only that which he had forbidden to be published (D. C. 45:15,) but also that which had not as yet been given to the church at the time. It is certain that the Lord had as much knowledge of the procedure to be followed in preparing material for publication as we have, for after all the revelations were arranged in the manuscript which He had inspired Joseph to include in the Book of Commandments, He said:

"Behold this is mine authority, and the authority of my servants and my Preface to the Book of My Commandments, which I have given them to publish unto you, O ye inhabitants of the earth," etc., Bk. of Com. 1:2.

The clause "which I have given" is **present perfect tense** showing that the Lord was giving his endorsement to a book which He considered complete at that moment, so far as the material embodied in that book was concerned. No such endorsement was ever thus given by the Lord to the Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of the Latter Day Saints in 1835. Material selected from the revelations to the church other than those contained in the Book of Commandments, which might be in the hands of the committee of stewards, (D. C. 70:1,) were to be left to the discretion of Oliver Cowdery to be published in the Star. No other conclusion than this can be reached if we be disposed to accept all the evidence that has here been produced.

## CHAPTER SIX

**The Appendix Revelation Had No Place as Part of the First Edition of the Book of Commandments**

The argument is made that the "appendix" revelation, Doctrine and Covenants, Section 108, given November 3, 1831, was to have been included in the first edition of the Book of Commandments. There is nothing in the minutes of those special conferences to convey that impression. The facts are that this Appendix was two days too late, as the Preface, which closed the book for further material, was given November 1, 1831. In saying this we do not wish to convey the idea that we do not endorse this revelation, for we do, but on the other hand, God having foreknowledge of events that were to transpire could have waited until the close of these conferences to have given the preface just as well as he could have given it when he did. This would then have included the Appendix and possibly Section 70, but that was not the case. Nothing which Joseph wrote in his history indicated that it was to have gone in the first edition. This is what he does say, however:

"It had been decided by the conference that Elder Oliver Cowdery should carry the commandments and revelations to Independence, Missouri, for printing, and that I should arrange and get them in readiness by the time that he left, which was to be by-or if possible, before, the 15th of the month (November.) At this time there were many things which the Elders desired to know relative to preaching the gospel to the inhabitants of the earth, and concerning the gathering; and in order to walk by the true light, and be instructed from on high, on the 3rd of November, 1831, I inquired of the Lord and received the following important revelation (D. C. 108,) WHICH HAS SINCE BEEN ADDED TO THE BOOK OF DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS, and called the appendix." Ut. Ch. Hist., Vol. 1, page 229.

Nothing is here said about it becoming an appendage to the Book of Commandments. Joseph well knew that the



Preface, previously given, precluded adding it to the Book of Commandments, though nothing would have prevented including it in a second edition of the book. But at that time the Book of Commandments material was complete as God had authorized it. Yet there are those who contend that this revelation was intended to be printed in the first edition. For proof of such argument Apostle Curtis cited us, in the DeKalb Debate, to the statement of W. W. Phelps, found in the Evening and Morning Star for May, 1833:

"Having given in a previous number, the Preface to the Book of Commandments, now in press, we give below the close, or as it has been called the appendix," etc., E. & M. Star, 1833, Vol. 1, No. 12, page 1.

Concerning this matter, we read from the pen of J. R. Haldeman, long time printer and publisher, and editor of The Evening and Morning Star for May, 1912:

"It was true, that in 1833, it was purposed to add the 'appendix' to the Book of Commandments, but evidently the providence of God prevented the insertion of the revelation, not authorized when authority was granted for the publication of the Book.

"From the fact that the revelation they proposed to include was an 'appendix' shows that it was something added beyond what was originally intended." The E. & M. Star, Vol. 13, No. 1, page 1, May, 1912.

Aside from the statement of W. W. Phelps, there is no other evidence to show that this revelation was considered as an "appendix" to the first edition of the Book of Commandments, for the evidence, as before shown, is conclusive that when these special conferences began on November 1, 1831, Joseph Smith had the manuscript ready for their consideration in complete form, for the first session of the conference "voted that there be ten thousand copies struck," the "Preface was received by inspiration," and "a number of the brethren arose and said they were willing to testify to the world that they knew that they were of the Lord." Following this another revelation was received in the same session, (D. C. 67,) which said, "And now, I, the Lord give

unto you a testimony of the truth of these commandments which are lying before you." To be consistent with our claims of inspiration for these revelations, we should be able to see the necessity of accepting the position that the Lord considered the Book of Commandments complete without adding any of the revelations received after November 1, 1831. We must conclude therefore that if this appendage revelation was ever to have been included in the Book of Commandments, it would have been in a second or third edition, for as we have shown before, "early in the Spring of 1833 at Independence, Missouri, the revelations were printed in the Book of Commandments. Many Books were finished, \* \* and through some of the unwise brethren the world got hold of some of them," leading to the mob violence in July following; that to hasten its publication and circulation in this first edition, "3000 copies" were ordered printed the first edition by a conference in May, 1832; and that Joseph Smith, Jr., had received a copy and written concerning four typographical errors he had found in reviewing it, under date of June 25, 1833, almost a month before the press was destroyed. At this time a joint letter by Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams, called these errors to the attention of W. W. Phelps. (See Reorg. Ch. Hist., Vol. 1, page 300.) The only conclusion we can reach therefore, upon this statement to Phelps was that they approved of the Book of Commandments; and the appendix, meaning "a supplement or short treatise **added** to a book," was to have been included in some future edition of this Book.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

**A Review of the Testimony of David Whitmer Versus the Reorganized Church on the Copyright of the Book of Commandments, Etc.**

Another issue which will stand reviewing in connection with the Book of Commandments controversy is the question as to whether the Book was ever copyrighted, and as to whether it was ever endorsed by the church and used authoritatively by its ministry. We wish to state that the evidence is conclusive that according to the requirements of that day, the Book of Commandments was copyrighted and endorsed by the church, as the word of God to us in this generation of time. David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the divinity of the Book of Mormon, was also in attendance at the important special conferences held at Hiram, Ohio, November 1-12, 1831. If his testimony relative to the Book of Mormon, as given on his death bed is reliable, then as an eye witness to events surrounding the Book of Commandments his testimony should be equally reliable.

We now give you an example of the efforts to discredit this testator, David Whitmer, by first calling attention to a tract entitled, "Book of Commandments and Doctrine and Covenants Reviewed by the Late President Joseph Smith," (page 1,) from which we quote the following:

" \* \* \* The Book of Commandments never was received and issued authoritatively by the church; the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was. The last comes to us having the sanction of the church in solemn assembly. The first does not."

Had President Smith been fully informed on this matter and written accordingly, we would then have had his statement as follows:

" \* \* \* The Book of Commandments **was** received and issued authoritatively by the Church; the Book of Doctrine and Covenants **never** was. The **first** comes to us as having

the sanction of the Church after due consideration for several days, and by endorsement of the word of God in revelation to those special conferences, the **last** does not, for neither Joseph Smith nor the Twelve were present at that conference of August 17, 1835, and those who did approve the Doctrine and Covenants, did it on the testimony of others for they had no time to examine the contents of the book."

A review of the history of these two books reveals the fact that the Book of Commandments was received and issued authoritatively by the church. In a previous chapter we have given you the minutes of the four special conferences held at Hiram, Ohio, November 1-12, 1831, which shows that the elders, including Joseph, himself, did approve it. Not only did they vote to approve it, but they bore their testimony of its divinity, and ordered ten thousand copies of it printed. Where do you find a similar action relative to the Doctrine and Covenants? History echoes "NO WHERE!" There is not one scintilla of evidence to show that the manuscript for the Doctrine and Covenants was ever prepared by Joseph Smith and submitted to the careful scrutiny of the leading quorums of the church before it appeared in book form. At the time the Doctrine and Covenants was foisted upon the Church of the Latter Day Saints, (not the Church of Christ,) in August of 1835, neither the Twelve, nor two members of the Presidency were in Kirtland, as we have shown before, though Joseph, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, also David Whitmer, were all present at the November, 1831, conferences which accepted the Book of Commandments as true. We have given the action of these special conferences elsewhere, also the testimonies of the elders. And we should bear in mind that William McClellin said that the testimony of the Twelve to the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835 was a "base forgery."\* This fact is borne out in the statement of David Whitmer, who said:

"I want to tell the brethren that when the Book of Doctrine and Covenants was published and presented to the church assembled in Kirtland, Ohio, in August 1835, as re-

\*See page 22 for text of McClellin statement.

corded in the old church papers, a very few of the brethren then knew about most of the important changes that had been put into the Book of Doctrine and Covenants.

"In time it was generally found out, and the result was that some of the members left the church on account of it." Address to All Believers in Christ, page 61.

Representatives of the Reorganized Church have often tried to discredit the testimony thus given by David Whitmer concerning the Book of Commandments, yet accept his dying testimony concerning the Book of Mormon. Their attitude in this regard is very inconsistent, for in one breath they discredit him, and in the next eulogize him. The late Herman C. Smith, historian of the Reorganized Church, had this to say of David Whitmer:

"He talked quite freely in regard to his experience in the Church, and we were favorably impressed with his manner, and his evident love of truth. His frank open countenance not only shows him to be one of nature's noblemen, but impresses one that he is not of the type of men who could be coaxed, or bribed into a system of intrigue or deception." Reorg. Ch. Hist., Vol. 4, page 449.

Again David Whitmer stated this concerning the Book of Commandments:

"These revelations were arranged for publication by Brother Joseph Smith, Sidney Rigdon, Orson Hyde and others in Hiram, Ohio, while I was there, and sent to Independence, to be published and were printed just exactly as they were arranged by Brother Joseph and the others. AND WHEN THE BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS WAS PRINTED, JOSEPH AND THE CHURCH RECEIVED IT AS BEING PRINTED CORRECTLY. THIS I KNOW." Address page 56.

Now we will give you an example of the manner in which this statement of David Whitmer was twisted, warped and distorted to appear as an endorsement of the Doctrine and Covenants:

" \* \* \* In this statement quoted above by David Whitmer he says that the revelations 'were printed just exactly as they were arranged by Brother Joseph Smith and the

others.' According to this then, the revelations as published in the Book of Commandments were not in harmony with the original revelations, but were printed from copies of the original revelations, which copies had been altered; and as Whitmer certifies that the Book of Commandments was published in harmony with these altered revelations, therefore we must conclude that the Book of Commandments cannot be relied upon." Apostle J. F. Curtis, in *Our Beliefs Defended*, page 25.

Now we would like to ask Mr. Curtis, Where did David Whitmer say that these revelations were printed in the Book of Commandments from altered copies? Does Mr. Curtis accuse Joseph Smith of altering these revelations while he was "arranging and reviewing them" for publication? Whom does he thus accuse of such skulduggery? In the quotation from David Whitmer we note that he said, "This I know," \* \* \* "while I was there," etc., showing that he was talking as an "eyewitness" to the things he testified took place. By reading the minutes of these four special conferences, you will note that David Whitmer's name appeared repeatedly in the roll call of elders. Thus he speaks with the authority of an eye witness while Apostle Curtis speaks as one who has an axe to grind. David Whitmer did not "certify that the Book of Commandments was published in harmony with \* \* altered revelations," not at all. He did state, however, that they were printed in the Book of Commandments "JUST EXACTLY AS THEY WERE ARRANGED BY JOSEPH SMITH AND OTHERS." This being true, if they were altered, "Joseph Smith and the others" altered them, and Apostle Curtis stands vindicated in his charge. At a later date David Whitmer makes a rebuttal in his eight page address to some of the fantastic charges made by the Reorganized Church leaders of his day. Under date of April 1, 1887, he further testifies:

"I am sorry that there are among you (the Reorganized Church,) who are so blind and prejudiced, in their attempts to cover up the errors of those who introduced doctrines which were not in the written word, that they will believe

these changes happened by mistake in copying, before the Book of Commandments was printed." And we can say with him that we too, are sorry for such blindness and prejudice which still persists, and helps to separate the Restoration into separate factions hindering the building of the Temple and making the necessary preparation for the gathering, the redemption of Zion, and the preparation of a people for the coming of our Lord.

Having shown the various steps taken to bring the printing of the Book of Commandments to the point of completion, where the binding thereof would be the next step, we call your attention to the following, from the pen of the late President Joseph Smith:

"There was no official copy of the Book of Commandments in existence. Some of the brethren who were there in town when the press was destroyed, the type and paper, including the printed sheets of the Book of Commandments thrown into the streets and scattered, picked up what they wanted and had them bound, **some even binding them in paper covers.**" "Book of Commandments and Doctrine and Covenants Reviewed, By the late President Joseph Smith," page 5.

We are made to wonder if those who make this claim ever stopped to realize what risk these brethren ran, when they are alleged to have "picked up" out of the streets, these "scattered sheets." Do they have the testimony of one person who was there and performed this hazardous act? If so, let them bring him forth. Neither is there evidence that the Book of Commandments was in a loose sheet condition at the time. Here, though, is the testimony of a man **who was there**, and risked his life to get what he considered were "the only copies of that edition of the Book of Commandments preserved from destruction." We found this testimony in the Mss. Journal History, of "Andrew Jensen's Journal History," in the Utah Church Library. John Taylor stated:

"In 1833 at the time of the destruction of the printing press in Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, the print-

ed sheets of the Book of Commandments and the pried type and press were thrown in an old log stable by the mob. I asked Bishop Partridge if I might go and get out some copies of the Book of Commandments, he said it would most likely cost me my life, if I attempted it. I told him I did not mind hazarding my life to securing some copies of the commandments; he then said that I might go.

"I ran my hand into a crack between the logs and pulled out a few at a time until I got as many as I could carry. When I was discovered a dozen men surrounded me and commenced throwing stones at me, and I shouted out, 'Oh my God must I be stoned to death like Stephen, for the sake of the word of the Lord?' The Lord gave me strength and skill to elude them and make my escape without being hit by a stone. I delivered the copies to Bishop Partridge, who said that I had done a good work. My escape was a miracle. These I believe are the only copies of that edition of the Book of Commandments preserved from destruction." Historian's office, Greater Salt Lake City, 1858. "Given in the presence of Leo Hawkins, George A. Smith."

Thus were "copies of that edition of the Book of Commandments preserved from destruction." It would be interesting to know how many, and as to how they were bound. We recall that David Whitmer had a copy "early in the spring of 1833," and that Joseph Smith reviewed a copy of it before June 25, 1833, and found only four typographical errors, therefore, these "copies" that Taylor risked his life for were evidently bound in paper similar to the one Whitmer and others had before the printing office was wrecked.

In a footnote to the pamphlet, "The Book of Commandments and Doctrine and Covenants Reviewed," page 5, by the late Joseph Smith, from which we quoted above, we find this statement:

"David Whitmer is quoted as saying that the Book of Commandments was complete and that he had a complete copy bound in paper. \*Be it remembered, however, that David Whitmer testified on this point fifty years after the

\*Compare with the statement of Heman C. Smith, page 46.



event. The fact that his copy was paper bound would indicate that it was temporary, an arrangement of pages so far as the printers had gone when the mob interrupted their work."

In this statement we find the writer going out of his way to cast aspersion on the veracity of David Whitmer, in his "blind, prejudiced \* \* attempts to cover up the errors of those who introduced doctrines which are not in the written word," for if his death bed testimony concerning the Book of Mormon is acceptable, then his testimony "fifty years after the event," relative to the Book of Commandments is likewise valid. We now give you the instructions of Joseph, et al, found in a letter from Kirtland, Ohio, under date of June 25, 1833, on the question of binding, showing that a "temporary" binding was all that was available at the time:

"First, as respects getting the Book of Commandments bound, we think that it is not necessary. They will be sold well without binding, and there is no bookbinder to be had as we know of, NOR ARE THERE MATERIALS TO BE HAD FOR BINDING without keeping the book too long from circulation." Reorg. Ch. Hist., Vol. 1, page 298.

From this instruction we can readily see why David Whitmer said he had a "complete copy bound in paper cover," for that was the only "MATERIAL TO BE HAD," as certified by Joseph Smith the prophet, consequently the position taken by his son, the late President Joseph Smith, will not stand as evidence on this point, for it was not desired to "keep the book too long from circulation," for lack of a better binding.

Another evidence that the Book of Commandments was complete is the fact that Joseph Smith and the elders at Kirtland had a copy of it almost a month before the printing office was destroyed on July 20, 1833, and on comparing it with the original manuscript, noted only four typographical errors in it, and those errors, as he noted them in the above letter of June 25th, were never corrected, showing that the first edition was off the press complete, before the mob vio-

lence, which took place the following month. We have said enough on this for the present. Now we will turn our attention to the question of the copyrighting of this book.

We now quote from the statement of David Whitmer, over which we have had so much controversy, as a contrast to that which was stated by representatives of the Reorganized Church above given:

"You say the Book of Commandments was never printed complete. I say that it was printed complete (and copyrighted.) It was printed complete and many copies distributed among the members of the church before the printing press owned by the church was destroyed. Brother Joseph and the brethren received it at first as being printed correctly: but they soon decided to print the Doctrine and Covenants. I have a copy of it which was printed complete. Brother Jacob Whitmer gave his copy to Brother John C. Whitmer, his son, who now has it, and upon the title page of which is this in large letters:

**"A BOOK OF COMMANDMENTS FOR THE GOVERNMENT OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, ORGANIZED ACCORDING TO LAW ON THE 6th OF APRIL, 1830. ZION. PUBLISHED BY W. W. PHELPS & CO., 1833."**

"These books were finished complete and bound in paper covers. I tell you I was in Jackson County at the time, and know what I am saying. I am an eyewitness to these facts, and there are other witnesses yet living. I received my Book of Commandments, complete, before the press was destroyed by the mob as did many other brethren." E. & M. Star, May, 1912, page 3, quoted from Whitmer's 8-page address of April 1, 1887.

In connection with this statement of David Whitmer, I wish to call your attention to the further testimony he gives on this issue in his 8 page Address:

"You have the Book of Commandments before you. There is only one hundred and sixty pages in it. You have it all." Address of April, 1887, page 8.

We now give you the proof of the copyright of the Book of Commandments, and later the evidence to show

that the Book of Commandments was complete with only 160 pages. On a recent trip to Washington, D. C., we looked for the copyright papers on this book, and after an extended research, we learned that inasmuch as this work was copyrighted prior to the time such records were kept in Washington, D. C., that it would be found in Missouri, if it existed. Searching among our papers at home, we brought to light the following, which had been almost forgotten, a letter from the clerk of the United States District Court of Missouri:

## (COPY OF COPYRIGHT)

"Be it remembered that on the thirteenth day of February, in the year of our Lord, one thousand eight hundred and thirty-three, W. W. Phelps & Co., having deposited in the office of the United States District Court for the Missouri District, the title of a book the right whereof they claim as authors and proprietors in the words and figures following to wit:

" 'A Book of Commandments for the government of the Church of Christ, organized according to Law, on the 6th day of April, 1830.'

"In conformity to the act of Congress entitled 'An Act for the encouragement of learning, by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies, during the times therein mentioned,' and also an act entitled, 'An Act Supplementary to an Act for the encouragement of learning by securing the copies of Maps, Charts, and Books, to the Authors and Proprietors of such copies during the times therein mentioned, and extending the benefits thereof to Arts of designing, engraving and etching historical and other prints.'

"In testimony whereof, I, Joseph Gamble, Clerk of the said Court, have hereunto set my hand, and affixed the seal of my office, the day and year above written.

"United States of America. Joseph Gamble, Clerk.

"Western District of Missouri)ss  
Central Division )

"I, Edwin R. Durham, Clerk of the District Court of the

United States for the Central Division of the Western District of Missouri, and by operation of law the custodian of records, books, papers and files of the United States Court for the Missouri District, do hereby certify that the foregoing is a full, true and correct copy of the Copy Right of the Book therein mentioned, as the same remains on record in my office.

"In testimony whereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed the seal of the District Court of the United States for the Central Division of Missouri, this 7th day of April, A. D., 1921.

By H. C. Geisberg,  
Edwin R. Durham, Clerk,  
Deputy."

This disposes of the copyright question and shows that David Whitmer's testimony on this point was true. Now we wish to examine the other statements he made and see whether he was or was not a reliable witness concerning the completeness of the Book. We now call attention to a letter addressed to Elder John R. Haldeman, deceased, who was a long time printer and editor, and who was Editor of The Evening and Morning Star, published by the Church of Christ on the Temple Lot in the early 1900's. This letter was written to him by the Reference Librarian of the New York Public Library, November 30, 1911, in answer to a letter of inquiry. We quote:

"I have to say that this Library at one time had a copy of the Book of Commandments that had belonged to David Whitmer as evidenced by a letter filed with the book by a former owner, Mr. Berrian. This copy lacked the last page and was exchanged by us, going to the Library of Congress at Washington. Before this exchange was made we had secured from a local dealer, a perfect copy of the work. This copy shows no marks of previous ownership. It consists of one hundred and sixty pages, and the last paragraph on page 160 reads as follows:

" '47. For verily I say that the rebellious are not of the blood of Ephraim.' "

In connection with the testimony we have given above, we wish now to add that of Elder John R. Haldeman, who also conducted an exhaustive study of this question for the Church of Christ. This testimony appears in the Evening and Morning Star for May, 1912:

The "description given by Elder Whitmer as to the completion of the Book of Commandments and that it was a book of one hundred and sixty pages, is borne out by some recent investigations we have made. We have located five of the original books in different sections of the United States and they are all of one hundred and sixty pages."

In view of the corroborative testimony of all these witnesses, it is more than a coincidence that in every case, these books, bound in paper covers originally, all consisting of one hundred and sixty pages each, should still be found intact today, as testimony against the claims of those who have made such elaborate efforts to discredit this book and malign those who have persisted in their efforts to hold this purer source of inspiration before the world as a guide.

We might add a bit of personal testimony to what has gone before. We have handled the David Whitmer copy of the Book of Commandments which was in the hands of John Snyder, his scribe, for many years. On a recent trip through the eastern states, we visited the New York Public Library, and the Library of Congress, in Washington, D. C. In both places we found original copies of this book. This makes three that we have handled, compared and made notes of, and in each case we find they were complete, bound with paper covers, and had only one hundred and sixty pages. We were able to obtain a microfilm copy of the entire book at the New York Public Library for lecture use. Other copies are to be found in Utah, with the Reorganized Church, and at Yale University. Such material as this should bear weight with all those who are seeking the truth about this matter. And to that end, we have compiled it.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

**The Book of Commandments Was Received by the Church of Christ in 1831-34 as Being Correct and Authoritative.**

We feel that sufficient has been set forth in the previous chapters of this work to prove that the Book of Commandments was indeed regarded as the word of the Lord to the Church and to the world, by the elders of the early Church of Christ. Also that it was so used by the Elders of that time as an authoritative reference work in the guidance of their ministry. However, there are a few points that need consideration before we bring this critique to a close, so we turn our attention to another aspect of this controversy in which we shall show that the Church not only accepted of and used this book as a reference guide themselves, in conjunction with the Holy Scripture and the Book of Mormon, but that they appealed to it repeatedly as evidence of their faith and practice when petitioning the civil authorities of the land for redress during the days of persecution and trouble in Missouri. When it was so used and quoted, they gave page, chapter, and paragraph just as they appear in the original Book of Commandments.

On January 14, 1833, an Epistle was ordered sent to the "Bishop and his council and the Inhabitants of Zion," based upon a revelation given in September 1832, (D. & C. 83). This epistle was written by Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith, and contained the following instructions:

"Let the Bishop read this to the Elders, that they may warn the members of the scourge that is coming except they repent. Tell them to read the Book of Mormon and obey it; **Tell them to read the commandments that are printed, AND OBEY THEM,**" etc., UT. Chu. Hist. Vol. I, page 320.

By this time, January 14, 1833, several revelations, taken from the manuscript of the Book of Commandments, had been printed in the Evening and Morning Star, from June to December, 1832. There were eleven of them, i. e., Chapters

23, 29, 38, 40, 44, 45, 47, 48, 52, 60 and 62. These were the Commandments which had thus been **printed**, all revelations directly to the Church, which they were commanded to **read** and **obey**. Later in March, 1833, two other revelations, taken from the Mss., the Preface to the Book of Commandments, and chapter 28, were published. In each instance, with the exception of a few changes in punctuation and of typographical errors, the text was the same in the *Star* and the Book of Commandments. Yet, when these same revelations appeared later in the *Doctrine and Covenants*, in 1835, several of them had been mutilated and altered almost beyond recognition. We invite you, for your own enlightenment, to compare Bk. of Com., Chap. 44-47, which were combined as section 42 in the D. & C., and Bk. of Com., Chap. 48, with D. & C., Sec. 45; and Bk. of Com., Chap. 24, with D. & C. 17, the latter being the most conspicuous of all, and with which we deal more fully in another chapter. \*

Surely in January 1833, when this epistle was written by Orson Hyde and Hyrum Smith to the Bishopric in Zion, commanding the church there to **read** and **obey** these commandments, they knew whether or not these revelations were altered before thus publishing them. In this epistle, or by other communication, would have been an opportune time to have had them reviewed and corrected before appearing in the Book of Commandments.

In February 1834, a General Assembly appointed a committee, "to arrange the items of doctrine of Jesus Christ, for the government of His Church of the Latter Day Saints," etc. Seven months before this time, an Elder, Leonard Rich, was called in question "for selling the revelations at an extortionate price, while he was journeying east with Father Lyons. Brother Rich confessed, and the council forgave him upon his promising to do better and reform his life." *Ut. Ch. Hist.*, Vol. 2, page 27. This shows that the Book of Commandments was in circulation and for sale as a completed book among the members of the church. And while he was tried for **extortion**, not one word is said about these revelations

\*See page 73.

being incorrectly printed, and therefore needing to be suppressed.

Another evidence that the Book of Commandments was accepted by the early elders as being "correctly printed," is shown in the preparation and publication of the Lectures of Faith by Joseph Smith, Jr., and others, for use in the school of the prophets in Kirtland. Joseph stated in his history:

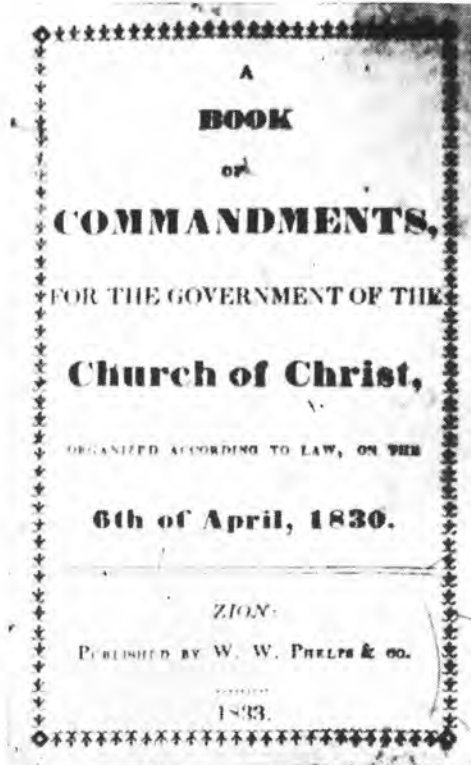
"During the month of January (1835), I was engaged in the school of the Elders, and in preparing the Lectures on Theology for publication in the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, which the committee appointed last September were now compiling," Joseph Smith, Ut. Ch. Hist., Vol 2, page 180.

These lectures were included in several of the early editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, but are now left out of the current Reorganized Church copies. Why? We will bear in mind that the committee appointed in September, 1834, (D. & C. 108a,) were **to arrange the doctrine of Jesus Christ, etc.**, but not one word was said to them in this instruction authorizing them to revise, mutilate or change the revelations from the way they appeared in the Book of Commandments. That Joseph Smith so understood the correctness of the revelations contained in the Book of Commandments at the time, we wish to show, by citing passages from those Lectures of Faith, that he, Joseph, considered the Book of Commandments an authoritative reference book; to wit:

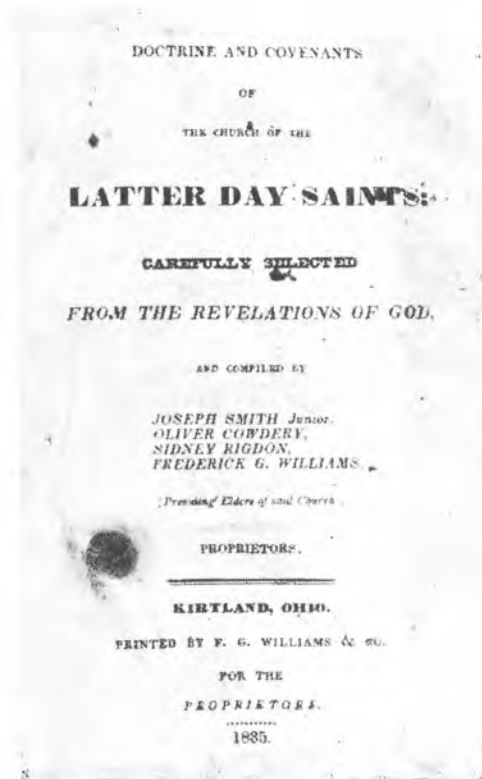
In the third lecture, the question under consideration was the "character, perfections and attributes" of God, and on page 38, (D. & C. 1835, Edition,) Joseph stated, as reference:

"10. Book of Commandments, chapt. 2nd, commencing in the third line of the first paragraph: 'For God does not walk in crooked paths, neither does He turn to the right hand or the left, or vary from that which He has said, therefore, his paths are strait, and his course is one eternal round.' Book of Commandments, chapt. 37:1, 'Listen to the voice of the Lord your God, even Alpha and Omega, the





The above is a photogravure print of the title page of the first edition of the Book of Commandments, published in 1833, by the Church of Christ, established April 6, 1830.



The above is a photogravure print of the title page of the Doctrine and Covenants of The Church of the Latter Day Saints, published at Kirtland, in 1835, by the Church of Latter Day Saints, organized August 17, 1835, at Kirtland, Ohio.

beginning and the end, whose course is one eternal round, the same yesterday, today and forever.' "

What a travesty that in these lectures the elders were being taught by reference to a revelation of God to us in these last days that "He does not walk in crooked paths," etc., yet, some of them, even at the time, were preparing to change these revelations and lead the Church of Christ down a "blind alley" to take upon her the alias name of the "Church of the Latter Day Saints" with an allegiance to doctrines and faith contrary to the teachings of Christ, to us in these last days. Surely we need to cry repentance in the land, that the children of the kingdom and Restoration may return to the "strait paths" of the Lord, and be truly prepared in righteousness for His coming. For this reason we plead with our brethren of the Reorganized church to weigh these things in the "true balance," that we may indeed be "one" in the sight of God, that the world may more fully believe upon our words and be prepared for the great day of the Lord when He shall come to claim his own. The authors of this review have long held up the standard of peace and felt it was the mission of the Church of Christ to help establish a working harmony by which we could all be united and work together for the salvation of Zion. Our record is clear on that. But back to our subject. We note in a series of questions following this "Third Lecture" the following:

"Q. Where do you find the revelations which give us this idea of the character of the Deity?

"A. In the Bible **and the Book of Commandments**, and they are quoted in the third lecture." (1835 Edition Doctrine and Covenants, page 42.)

Under these circumstances, brethren, how can you doubt that this Book of Commandments was in circulation and used by the elders in 1834, as an authoritative source of inspiration? Yet we find, in the face of these facts, men making such unwarranted assertions as these, "we must conclude that the Book of Commandments cannot be relied upon," (J. F. Curtis,) and "the Book of Commandments never was

received and issued authoritatively by the church," etc., (the late President Joseph Smith, of the Reorganized Church,) both of whom have proven themselves very unreliable witnesses with regard to the issues here involved.

But this is not all! We will now examine another phase of this review as to whether they were ever appealed to in petitioning the civil authorities of the land for redress. In this regard we cite you to the following action taken by the church in July of 1834, after the Church was driven from Jackson County, Missouri. At this time an **Appeal** was drawn up by the brethren in Clay County, in which the Book of Commandments is quoted several times as authority for the beliefs of the Church of Christ, which shows that it was in more or less general circulation both among members of the Church as well as among people of the world a year after the press was destroyed.

"Whereas, the Church of Christ, **recently styled the Church of Latter Day Sain'ts**, \* \* \* has suffered \* \* losses on account of the religious belief and faith of its members, which belief and faith are founded in the revealed word of God, as recorded in the Holy Bible or the Book of Mormon, the revelations and commandments of our Savior, Jesus Christ."

\* \* \* \*

"It will be seen by a reference to the Book of Commandments, page 135, that the Lord has said to the church, and we mean to live by his words, 'Let no man break the law of the land for he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land.' (Bk. of Com., 59:25.)

" \* \* If any man will take the pains to read the one hundred and fifty-third page of the Book of Commandments, he will find it there said, 'Wherefore the Land of Zion shall not be obtained but by purchase or by blood, otherwise there is none inheritance for you. And if by purchase, behold you are blessed, and if by blood, as you are forbidden to shed blood, lo, your enemies are upon you, and ye shall be scourged from city to city and from synagogue to

synagogue, and but few shall stand to receive an inheritance.' (Book of Commandments, 64:31, 32.)

" \* \* \* we entreat the philanthropist, the moralist and the honorable men of all creeds and sects to read our publications, to examine the Bible, the Book of Mormon, and **the Commandments.** " Reorg. Ch. Hist, Vol. 1, pages 505, 9, 10, and 13.

All of the above quotations were taken from this Appeal that was sent to the heads of our government, and the "honorable men of all creeds" pleading for redress from the wrongs they had suffered. This was published by the Historian of the Reorganized Church, therefore these men were not, and are not ignorant of the fact that the Book of Commandments was held in high esteem by the early elders, and that they accepted it as one of the standard books of the church along with the Bible and Book of Mormon. We note that in one quotation given in this appeal, Chapter 64, it was apparent that they had a complete copy of the first edition of the Book of Commandments before them, and a careful perusal of the rest of the book shows that there were only 65 chapters, or one hundred and sixty pages. They had quoted from the "one hundred and fifty third page," which would be part of the last form printed. Thus the entire book was completely printed, bound and in circulation at the time this appeal was written, else how could "any man take the pains to read" what was found on the "one hundred and fifty-third page of the Book of Commandments"? At the time this appeal was written, July, 1834, the Doctrine and Covenants was not in existence.

It is quite evident that the Book of Commandments was held in high esteem, not only by David Whitmer, but by many others of the Elders, for we find that as late as 1837, two years after the Doctrine and Covenants was printed, Lyman Wight, one of the Twelve Apostles at the time, was tried before the High Council in Kirtland for saying:

"That the Doctrine and Covenants was a telectual law, and the Book of Commandments was a celestial law." Mil.

Star., Vol. 15, page 851.

Think it over brethren, what glory are you striving for in the resurrection, a Celestial Glory or just a Telestial Glory?

## CHAPTER NINE

**W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer Were Appointed to Select Material for The Evening and Morning Star, But Not to Revise the Book of Commandments.**

We wish to clear up some of the confusion that exists in the minds of some, relative to the duties of the committee which was appointed by a conference in Missouri, May 1, 1832, to make selections from the revelations "for the press." Some have taken the position that the work of this committee superseded the work of Joseph Smith, Jr., which by resolution had been assigned him in the special conference of November 8, 1831, by which authorization he "reviewed and arranged" the revelations that were to go into the Book of Commandments. In this connection it will be borne in mind that plans had been completed for printing the first issue of the Evening and Morning Star, and that it was vital that some of these revelations should be published and circulated for the use and benefit of its members, through the medium of the press.

Inasmuch as the manuscript for the Book of Commandments was at hand in Missouri, in the hands of Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer, it was only fitting that selections should be made from them from time to time for the Star, which was to issue its first number in June, 1832. To provide for this selection, the following resolution, May 1, 1832, made, provision for the editors of the Star:

"That W. W. Phelps, Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer be appointed to review and prepare such revelations as shall be deemed proper for publication for the press." T. & S., Vol. 5, page 625.

Some have interpreted this to mean that these three brethren were instructed to "review and prepare" the manuscript for the Book of Commandments. Subsequent evidence disproves such allegations. Oliver Cowdery and John Whitmer were already in custody of the manuscript of the Book of Commandments, having brought it with them to Missouri,

at the time they left Hiram, Ohio, the 20th of November, 1831, after the special conferences where Joseph Smith, Jr., had reviewed, arranged and corrected it, as set forth previously in this book. Prior to this conference in Missouri, May 1, 1832, no editorial staff had been appointed for the Star. By this action, of appointing Phelps, Cowdery and Whitmer, two of whom had been "dedicated and consecrated by the prayer of faith," to have charge of the manuscript, it was only fitting for them to help in the review and preparation of "such revelations as shall be deemed proper for publication for the press." And when we observe the results of their labors as set forth in a previous chapter (page 56) we find that such revelations so selected, were diligently printed the same in both the Star and the Book of Commandments.

In view of these facts, it is apparent that the term, "for the press" in the above resolution, had reference to the work usually performed by editors of newspapers, such as the Evening and Morning Star, and not to compiling of material for a book. That such was the understanding of these three men is well attested, for we find that numerous revelations given to the church, i. e., The Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ, (Bk. of Com. 24,) part of D. & C., 83, etc., were so printed in the Star, but some of the revelations received before November, 1831, such as D. & C., 57, and the fore part of Section 83, which revealed Independence as the center place, was never so printed, for the Lord had warned them to "keep these things from going abroad to the world, until it is expedient in me," etc. These points are proof that the action of May 1, 1832, did not license these men to revise the manuscript for the Book of Commandments in any way. But as editors of the Star, it gave them discretionary authority to print in "the press" (the Star,) "such revelations as shall be deemed proper for the press."

In contrast to this kind of effort to justify the changes made in the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ as published in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Cove-



and take the lead of meetings; but some of them (unless there is an elder present, in all cases is to assist the elder.

11 33 The teacher's duty is to watch over the church always, and be with them, and strengthen them, and see that there is no iniquity in the church, neither hardness with each other, neither lying nor backbiting, nor evil speaking;

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

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

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

12 43 Every elder, priest, teacher or deacon, is to be ordained according to the gifts and callings of God unto him, by the power of the Holy Ghost which is in the one who ordains him.

13 44 The several elders composing this church of Christ, are to meet in conference once in three months, or from time to time, as they shall direct or appoint, to do church business (whenever) is necessary.

14 45 And each priest, teacher, who is ordained by a priest, shall take a certificate from him at the time, which when presented to an elder, he is to give him a license, which shall authorize him to perform the duty of his calling.

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

14 46 The elders or priests are to have a sufficient

14. No person is to be ordained to any office in this church, where there is a regularly organized branch of the same, without the vote of that branch; but the presiding elders, travelling bishops, high councilors, high priests, and bishops, may have the privilege of ordaining, where there is no branch of the church, that a vote may be called.

17. Every president of the high priesthood (or presiding elder), bishop, high councilor, and high priest, is to be ordained by the direction of a high council, or general conference.

no occasion requires

when there is an elder present he is only to preach, teach, baptize, exhort, and strengthen, and visit the sick, and exhort them, and exhort them to pray constantly and in secret, and to attend to all family duties.

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14. The elders are to receive their license from the church, as they shall direct or appoint, to do church business (whenever) is necessary.

The printed text of the above cut is a photographic reproduction of page 52 of the original Book of Commandments published by the Church of Christ, at Independence, Missouri, in 1833, as Chapter 24: 37-46. This text has been diligently compared with the text of the same revelation afterward printed in the Doctrine and Covenants, by the Church of the Latter Day Saints in 1835, at Kirtland, Ohio, as Section 2:10 to 19, both versions being a part of the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ. The handwritten text in the margins represents the alterations and changes made in this important revelation in 1835 in which three whole paragraphs, (14, 16 and 17,) were inserted, when two hundred and six words were added, twenty-five words were deleted, and twelve changes in punctuation were made.

nants, in which a labored effort was made to make it appear that the additions of paragraphs 16 and 17, of Section 17, of the current Reorganized Church's Doctrine and Covenants were necessary because of alterations made by some phantom whom they do not name, we wish to cite you to the following candid and more plausible reason why these paragraphs were added:

" \* \* \* Some of the early revelations published in the 'Book of Commandments,' in 1833, were revised by the prophet himself in the way of correcting errors made by the scribes and publishers; AND SOME ADDITIONAL CLAUSES WERE INSERTED TO THROW INCREASED LIGHT UPON THE SUBJECTS TREATED IN THE REVELATIONS, AND PARAGRAPHS ADDED, TO MAKE THE PRINCIPLES OR INSTRUCTIONS APPLY TO OFFICERS NOT IN THE CHURCH AT THE TIME SOME OF THE EARLIER REVELATIONS WERE GIVEN. THE ADDITION OF VERSES 65, 66, and 67, in SECTION XX OF THE DOCTRINE AND COVENANTS IS AN EXAMPLE." (Capitalization mine. C.L.W.), Ut. Ch. Hist, Vol. 1, page 173. (Section 20 of the Utah Doctrine and Covenants is the same as Section 17 in the Reorganized Church's Doctrine and Covenants.)

Other examples of such "inserts," and "paragraphs added" can be noted by comparing Book of Commandments 44: 12, 44, with Doctrine and Covenants 42: 4, 15, also D. & C. 68:-, with E. & M. Star, Vol 1, No. 5, page 3, for October, 1832, in which 323 words were added to give the First Presidency Supreme Directional Control over the General Bishopric. All of which shows a deliberate, premeditated plan to alter the early revelations to the church in such manner as to make it appear that a First Presidency was provided for at the time the original revelations were received. And to make a bad matter worse, they reprinted the first fourteen numbers of the Evening and Morning Star at Kirtland in 1835, where they changed every revelation printed therein, which had harmonized with the Book of Commandments, so that they would be in agreement with the altered and mutilated versions as they ap-

peared in the Doctrine and Covenants.

During this same transformation period from the Church of Christ as restored April 6, 1830, to that of the Church of the Latter Day Saints, 1834-35, they even changed the name of the church, as is shown by the following action:

"Minutes of a conference of THE ELDERS OF THE CHURCH OF CHRIST, which Church was organized in the Township of Fayette, Seneca County, New York, on the 6th of April, A. D., 1830. (Capitalization mine, C.L.W., the date of these minutes was Kirtland, May 3, 1834.)

"President Joseph Smith, Jr., was chosen moderator, and Frederick G. Williams and Oliver Cowdery were appointed clerks.

"After prayer, the conference proceeded to discuss the subject of names and appellations, when a motion was made by Sidney Rigdon, and seconded by Newel K. Whitney, that this church be known hereafter by the name of 'The Church of the Latter-Day Saints.' Remarks were made by the members, after which the motion passed by unanimous vote," etc., *Ut. Ch. Hist*, Vol. 2, pages 62-63.

Having changed the name of the Church, the next step was to change its doctrine and organic structure, and the way was open for the coming forth of the Doctrine and Covenants as arranged for in a General Assembly, the following September 24, 1834. (D. & C., 108a.)

Reviewing the Doctrine and Covenants and the so-called justification for its coming forth, we wish to refer the reader to the current edition of the Doctrine and Covenants published by the Reorganized Church. We call your attention to the instruction given to a certain committee, who compiled it on September 24, 1834:

"The assembly being duly organized and after transacting certain business for the church, proceeded to appoint a committee to arrange the items of the doctrine of Jesus Christ, for the government of His Church of the Latter Day Saints, which was organized and commenced its rise on the 6th day of April, 1830. THESE ITEMS ARE TO BE TAKEN FROM THE BIBLE, BOOK OF MORMON, AND THE

REVELATIONS WHICH HAVE BEEN GIVEN TO SAID CHURCH UP TO THIS DATE, or shall be until such arrangement is made." D. & Cov., 108a.

In this instruction, not one word is said that would authorize the wholesale mutilating, altering, adding to, or diminishing ought from the revelations from the way they had been previously printed in Missouri from June, 1832, to June, 1833. By previous conference action the Book of Commandments had already been approved as a standard work of the church and ordered printed. The Elders so used it, even to the extent of making quotations from it in the Lectures of Faith found in the Doctrine and Covenants.

This committee was instructed "to take from the Bible, Book of Mormon and the revelations," \* \* \* "items of doctrine of Jesus Christ," yet, in the entire Book of Doctrine and Covenants we find neither the Bible nor the Book of Mormon quoted. Why? This fact alone should cause every thinking person to look with suspicion upon the Doctrine and Covenants, for the work done was not in accord with the work assigned to the committee, but it changed the faith and doctrine of the church, the name of the church, and dealt treacherously with the work of the Lord as restored in these last days. For these reasons, we should give this question the more earnest and prayerful consideration which it deserves, and remember that the Lord has called us back to our first love, even the church which was truly restored on April 6, 1830, which is the Church of Christ.

## CHAPTER TEN

**Additions to the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ and Section Sixty-Eight of the Doctrine and Covenants Provide for a First Presidency.**

Our review of this controversy would not be complete if we failed to examine some of the alterations made in the revelations from what they were in the Book of Commandments. The committee who compiled the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants took liberties with the revelations purloined from the Book of Commandments which they would not have dared to take with any similar publication. It will be borne in mind that if our claims of continuous revelation as a source of light from heaven are sound and inspired of God, then we must determine the effects of changing what He was purported to give for the guidance of the church in these last days. We go to the world with a message which we proclaim to be of divine authenticity, yet with impunity, and sometimes brazenly, justify the altering and mutilating of that which is of God, to meet every changing expediency or fancy. In a previous chapter,\* in which we reviewed the Lectures of Faith, appearing in the early editions of the Doctrine and Covenants, the following was quoted from the Book of Commandments, "Listen to the voice of the Lord your God, even Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, WHOSE COURSE IS ONE ETERNAL ROUND, THE SAME TODAY AS YESTERDAY AND FOREVER." (Bk. Com. 37:1.) By condoning the alterations of His word to this generation made by Sidney Rigdon and other "smooth talkers," men make such a statement from the Lord seem hollow and without meaning.

We have heard the argument used, "God is progressive and as the need arises He can change His mind and add whatever He wants to. And, As man is, God once was, and as God is, man can become," and show by such reasoning that as man progresses by experience, so God

\*Chapter 8, pages 57-60.

progresses, and by the process of trial and error, determines what is for the best interests of mankind. Such theories are contrary to the plain word of God and should not be entertained by those who have been enlightened by the gospel of Jesus Christ, which has ever taught the constancy of God as the Supreme being with whom perfect knowledge and intelligence has resided since the foundation of the world. Therefore, what He may inspire by revelation, either to this generation or to another, can be expected to harmonize with that which He has given in the past or may give in the future. He is not a changeable God, therefore His servants should not be changeable nor inclined to change His word for the sake of expediency. This being true, then we cannot help but arrive at the conclusion, that when the Church of Christ was established, on the 6th day of April, 1830, and "organized in accordance with commandments and revelations, given to ourselves in the last days, **as well as according to the order of the church** as recorded in the New Testament," it was done under the inspiration of God. In this Church of Christ, the Book of Commandments had its being, teaching the identical doctrine of the New Testament and the Book of Mormon. When we contrast this early organization in its organic structure, faith and practice, with that which followed in 1834-35, we find little similarity.

On the 3rd day of May, 1834, at a conference held at Kirtland, Ohio, on motion made by Sidney Rigdon, the name of the Church was changed to that of the "Church of the Latter Day Saints," with no reference to Christ whatsoever in it. Then on September 24, 1834, a committee, composed of "Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, **Sidney Rigdon**, and Frederick G. Williams," was appointed to "arrange items of doctrine," etc., "for the government of the Church of the Latter Day Saints," and at a General Assembly on August 17, 1835, in the absence of the Twelve and Joseph Smith and Frederick G. Williams of the presidency, the report of this committee was accepted and the formal organization of the quorums and councils took place, and the

"Church of Latter Day Saints" was launched. (D. & C., 108a.) In this reorganization of the church we find the hand of Sidney Rigdon resting upon the helm to guide it. As the result, the Book of Doctrine and Covenants came into being with all its marks of apostasy clearly stamped upon it in the form of mutilated, altered and changed revelations, in a cunningly devised plan to make it appear that the new quorums and officers, set in the church at that time, were in harmony with original revelations before they appeared in the Book of Commandments. This cunning fable has been perpetuated and repeated so many times that falsehood has been made to appear as truth, and many thousands of people today in the Restoration guide their spiritual lives by its deception.

With this background before us, we wish to give the reader the benefit of comparing three of the most outstanding revelations given to the church dealing with the organic structure of the church. They are Bk. of Com., 15:2, 27, with D. & C., 16:1, 5; concerning the calling of the Twelve apostles; Bk. of Com. 24, with D. & C., Sec. 17, containing the Articles and Covenants; and E. & M. Star for October, 1832, page three, with D. & C. 68.

In Section 16, of the Doctrine and Covenants, they added 20 words, changed 5 words and left out one. The most important, being in the 5th verse, which in the Book of Commandments, 15:27 reads:

" \* \* behold, there are others which are called to declare my gospel, both unto Gentile and unto Jew; YEA, EVEN UNTO TWELVE."

In the Doctrine and Covenants it reads:

" \* \* behold, there are others who are called to declare my gospel, both unto Gentile and unto Jew; YEA, EVEN TWELVE."

In the first instance the calling here provided for, was limited to nine Apostles, in addition to Joseph Smith, Jr., Oliver Cowdery and David Whitmer, while in the last it provided for Twelve in addition to the three already named in the revelation. Thus we see an attempt to make it appear

that a presidency of three was provided for even before the church was organized, as this revelation (Bk. of Com., 15.) was given in June 1829, ten months before the church was organized April 6, 1830.

In this same month, Joseph Smith, Jr., gave the Articles and Covenants as a "Revelation on Church Government," the next revelation received after chapter 15 referred to above was given. This date is important from the fact that it set forth not only the date for the organization of the church, but its form of government, with apostles, (Bk. of Com., 24:32,) being the highest officers in the church the same as in the New Testament Church of Christ at Jerusalem and the Church of Christ among the Nephites.

In comparing the Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ as it was originally printed in the Evening and Morning Star for June, 1832, with the same printed in the Star for June, 1833, after having been compared with the original Mss., we find only eleven words different, due to typographical errors or transcribing; and afterward printed for the third time in the Book of Commandments, we find it identically the same as it had thus been corrected. When this same revelation was later mutilated and printed in the Kirtland Reprint of the Evening and Morning Star, and the Doctrine and Covenants in 1835, we find many, many changes in it. In the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants and Kirtland reprint, versions of this revelation, three whole paragraphs were inserted. Two hundred and six words were added and twenty-five words were left out of Chapter 24, page 52, original 1833 Book of Commandments.\* THIS WAS DONE ALSO TO MAKE IT APPEAR THAT A PRESIDENCY WAS PROVIDED FOR IN THESE EARLY REVELATIONS. This revelation was constitutional in its nature, complete enough in its statement of faith and practice of the Church of Christ to be considered as Articles of Association and By-laws when the church was organized, "and established agreeable to the laws of our country," which implied the corporation of the church as a religious

\*See cut on page 66.



society. This is what Joseph Smith, Jr., had to say about this important revelation:

"In this manner did the Lord continue to give us instructions from time to time, concerning the duties which now devolved upon us; (referring to B. of C., 15, D. & C., 16,) and among many other things of the kind, we obtained of Him the following, (B. of Com. 24,) by the spirit of prophecy and revelation; which not only gave us much information BUT ALSO POINTED OUT TO US THE PRECISE DAY UPON WHICH, ACCORDING TO HIS WILL AND COMMANDMENT, WE SHOULD PROCEED TO ORGANIZE HIS CHURCH ONCE MORE HERE UPON THE EARTH." Ut. Ch. Hist., Vol 1, p. 64.

Thus we see that ten months before the church was organized the Articles and Covenants were given by revelation, yet in 1834, they added three whole paragraphs to it to sustain the idea that a presidency was provided for before the church was organized. And representatives of the Reorganization still try to perpetuate this error upon the church by claiming that the differences were due to alterations made before the Book of Commandments was printed.

We call your attention again to the fact that this important revelation, given to the church in June, 1829, was first published in the Evening and Morning Star for June, 1832. Later it was reprinted in the Star for June, 1833. As in most cases, the first number of a newspaper such as the Star, (being the first newspaper west of the Mississippi River), usually becomes depleted in a very short time, being used as a prospectus number to get subscribers, etc., consequently, in June, 1833, just thirteen months later, it was decided to print it again, with this editorial statement by W. W. Phelps, attached:

"We have again inserted the Articles and Covenants according to our promise in a previous number, for the benefit of our brethren abroad, who have not the first number of the first volume. AS THERE WERE SOME ERRORS WHICH HAD GOT INTO THEM BY TRANSCRIBING, WE

HAVE SINCE OBTAINED THE ORIGINAL COPY AND MADE THE NECESSARY CORRECTIONS." (Capitalization mine. C.L.W.) E. & M. Star, June, 1833, page 2.

The late Joseph Smith, President of the Reorganized Church, erroneously ascribed this statement of W. W. Phelps, originally printed in the Star for June, 1833, to Oliver Cowdery, editor of the Kirtland Reprint of the Star, in 1835. We here give you the position of the late Joseph Smith:

"In the reprint of the Evening and Morning Star, published at Kirtland, Ohio, and of which Oliver Cowdery was editor, in the first number of volume two, page 196, prefacing an extract from the Book of Mormon, the editor says:

"We have again inserted the articles and covenants according to our promise in a previous number, for the benefit of our brethren abroad who have not the first number of the first volume. As there were some errors which got into them by transcribing, we have since obtained the original copy and made the necessary corrections."

"No one could know whether there were errors in the first publication of the Commandments better than Oliver Cowdery, who was a member of both the first and the second committees on their preparation and compilation." Book of Commandments and Book of Doctrine and Covenants Reviewed, by the late Joseph Smith, page 6-7.

Let us bear in mind that it was W. W. Phelps who originally made this statement in the Star, for June, 1833. (See E. & M. Star, Vol. 2, No. 13, page 2,) and not Oliver Cowdery, the editor, when the Star was reprinted at Kirtland where all the revelations were altered therein to agree with the Doctrine and Covenants. It will be observed that when the Articles and Covenants was corrected in 1833 in the Star, that it was the same as found in the Book of Commandments and the manuscript and not as found in the Doctrine and Covenants. There are only eleven words different in the two texts printed in the Star and they appeared later in the Book of Commandments the same way.

"The several elders composing this Church of Christ

are to meet in conference once in three months, OR FROM TIME TO TIME AS THEY SHALL DIRECT OR APPOINT, to do church business whatsoever is necessary." Bk. of Com., Chap 24:43. (The words in capital letters were the words added for correction to make it harmonize with the "original copy" to which W. W. Phelps referred.)

In speaking of the changes made in this revelation, I believe that the Historian of the Utah Church more correctly states the facts concerning this matter than do some representatives of the Reorganized church. We have given his full statement in a previous chapter\*, so will only give part of it now, "the addition of verses 65, 66, and 67, in Section 20 of the Doctrine and Covenants, is an example," (Reorg. D. & C., 17:16, 17.), to make "instructions apply to officers not in the church at the time some of the earlier revelations were given." Under these circumstances, we are made to wonder why our Reorganized brethren do not adopt the same factual method of accounting for these changes as do the Utah brethren. It would make the task of effecting a "working harmony" less difficult, for an honest doubt may be excused but deliberate misrepresentation of facts cannot be excused. And in thus speaking frankly, we do not mean to blame the whole membership nor the whole ministry of the Reorganized Church for this condition, for we sincerely believe that the vast majority of them are sincere in their belief on these questions, though deceived, and many of them, if given the opportunity to know the truth and to express their true convictions, would readily repudiate the false doctrines that have come into the church through the Doctrine and Covenants. We feel a strong tie of fellowship for our brethren of the Reorganized Church, even going so far as to accept many of their ordinations and baptisms as being authoritative and accept many of their membership as members of Christ's Kingdom on an equality with our own, but we find that as churches, we are still separated and hindered from working together as "one in Christ," because of these differences that persist.

\*See page 67.

Our constant prayer is that we may live to see the day when this veil shall be lifted and the honest in heart of the whole Restoration shall see eye to eye in the Lord, for we sincerely believe that that would be a glorious event for the Church restored in these latter days.

In this connection, we give you the statement of Parley P. Pratt, who was one of the first quorum of twelve apostles. He was also editor of the Millennial Star. He said:

"The revelation called Section 2, (1835 Edition,) was not all revealed in 1830. The 16th and 17th paragraphs of this section, (D. & C., 17:16,17,) relating to some of the higher councils of the Priesthood, were given several years after the rise of the church \* \* \* \* \* hence, paragraphs taken from revelations of later date are, in a few instances, incorporated with those of an earlier date. Indeed, at the time of compilation, the prophet **was inspired in several instances to write additional sentences and paragraphs to the earlier revelations.** In this manner the Lord did truly give line upon line, here a little and there a little." Mil. Star, Vol. 19, page 260, quoted in "Changes of the Revelations," by Dan McGregor.

In connection with this statement of Parley P. Pratt we give you the following from the History of the Reorganized Church in regard to the ordination of Joseph Smith, Jr., as president of the high priesthood in January of 1832. First we quote the words of Joseph Smith and then the comment of the Historian:

"On the 26th I (Joseph Smith) called a general council of the church, and was acknowledged as the president of the high priesthood, according to a previous ordination at a conference of high priests, elders and members held at Amherst, Ohio, on the 25th of January, 1832." Now we give you the Historians comment:

"An incidental mention is made in the above historical statement of the ordination of Joseph as 'president of the high priesthood' at Amherst, Ohio, on January 25, 1832. This seems to be a very meager mention of so important an event, **but we see that provision had been made for such**

**an office, even before the church was organized;** which the reader may see by referring to Doctrine and Covenants 17:17, where the person to hold such office is called 'president of the high priesthood (or presiding elder),' etc. Reorganized Church History Vol. 1, pages 244-45-46. (Emphasis mine, C.L.W.)

At a conference composed of "nine high priests, seventeen elders, four priests and thirteen members," held in Kirtland, Ohio, February 17, 1834, a High Council was organized, and "Joseph Smith, Jr., Sidney Rigdon and Frederick G. Williams, were acknowledged presidents," (Reorg. Ch. Hist. Vol. 1, page 429.) Still no revelation providing for a First Presidency of three presiding high priests had been given. (D.&C. 104:11)

This was one incident where they "treated lightly" the things they had received. All the evidence points to the fact that not one word of paragraph 17, above referred to, was in the original revelation. By this means the First Presidency was introduced into the church without a revelation providing for it, and nothing to indicate who had so ordained Joseph to that office. It was not till March 28, 1835, that the so-called revelation on Priesthood was given, which provided for the First Presidency, (three years and two months after Joseph was ordained. (See Ut. Ch. Hist. Vol. 2, page 210.)

Previous to the giving of this revelation on Priesthood, we find that on April 19, 1834, Joseph stated, on "the 19th, continuing our journey, dined at Brother Joseph Bosworth's, \* \* \* \* \*. We arrived the same day at Brother Jonathan Taylor's in Norton, (Ohio,) where we were received with kindness. We soon retired to **the wilderness** where we united in prayer and supplication for the blessings of the Lord to be given unto His Church \* \* \* \*. Those present then laid their hands upon the head of Elder Rigdon, and confirmed upon him the blessings of wisdom and knowledge to preside over the Church in my absence, also to have the Spirit to assist Elder Cowdery in conducting the Star, **in arranging the Book of Covenants,** \* \* \* \*. Previous

to blessing Elder Rigdon we laid hands on Elder Oliver Cowdery, and confirmed upon him the blessings of wisdom and understanding sufficient for his station that he be qualified to assist Elder Rigdon in **arranging the Church Book of Covenants** which is soon to be published." (Ut. Ch. Hist. Vol. 2, pages 50-51; also Times and Seasons Vol. 6; pages 1058-59.)

From that day to this the Church of the Latter Day Saints has continued in a "wilderness" of "vanity and unbelief" as the result of the "arranging of the Church Book of Covenants" or revelations by Sidney Rigdon with the resultant mutilations and changes in an attempt to make it appear that a Presidency was provided for "even before the church was organized." Thus we find the evidence to support the charge of David Whitmer, "That Oliver Cowdery told me that Rigdon was the cause of those changes being made; by smooth talk he convinced Joseph, Oliver, and P. G. Willicms, that it was all right. Oliver told me that he sorely repented of that thing and he repented of the other errors he had been led into by Rigdon and others." Saints' Herald Vol. 34, page 93. Quoted from Changes of the Revelations, by D. MacGregor, page 7.

At this juncture it would be interesting for us to make a comparison of these frank statements of what actually took place, with the positions taken by Apostle Curtis in his booklet, "Our Beliefs Defended," (pages 19, 20, 21, also 104, 105,) and by the Historian of the Reorganized church as set forth in the Reorganized Church History, Vol. 1, pages 580, 581, but space will not permit, as this review has grown long. Both brethren were wrong in their conclusions. Apostle Curtis's argument (Our Beliefs Defended, pages 19 and 20,) that "we find one hundred seventeen words published at the close of the first publication, not found at the close of the second publication of this revelation," etc., is so absurd and ridiculous that it hardly needs consideration, but to save others from falling into the same error as he, we call attention to the fact that if the trouble is taken to read the first printing of this revelation in the original



June, 1832 Star, it will be found that it comes under the title "Revelations" speaking in the plural, and the further review will show that the part he alleges was "added," was another revelation altogether, and the printer in "making up" the page had failed to put a dash between the two revelations to separate them. Thus, another of the erroneous conclusions jumped at by these brethren is exploded. "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, who seeth us? and who knoweth us?" etc. (Isa. 29:15.)

Another example of this kind of alteration is found in a comparison of Section 68 of the Doctrine and Covenants with the way it was first printed in the Evening and Morning Star, in Independence, Missouri, for October, 1832, page 3. In this revelation as changed and altered, 323 words were added and 21 left out. In both instances, i. e., Doctrine and Covenants, Sections 17 and 68, these changes were made to provide for a First Presidency and to give this unscriptural quorum Supreme Directional Control over the church and its finances. And when the Reorganized Church divests the Presidency of this authority, to that extent they repudiate the Doctrine and Covenants. But that is not all, we find that in the comparison of all the revelations, there are approximately 1,700 alterations found in the Doctrine and Covenants as compared with the way they were originally printed in the Star in Missouri and the Book of Commandments.

Much more could be added to what we have brought to light in this review to show the manner in which the word of the Lord to this generation has been corrupted with the resultant falling away from the faith, but sufficient has been brought forth to justify every thinking person to stop and retrace his steps if he desires to see the cause of Zion prosper. When we see leading men of the Reorganization join forces with secret orders and combinations, that both the Bible and the Book of Mormon warn us against as being an abomination in the sight of God, we are led to exclaim as did David Whitmer:



"Oh, the weakness and folly of man! How any person can be so blind in the face of all this evidence, as to still uphold the Book of Doctrine and Covenants, is more than I can understand. But there are none so blind as those who will not see.

"You have changed the revelations from the way they were first given and as they are today in the Book of Commandments, to support the error of Brother Joseph in taking upon himself the office of Seer to the church. You have changed the revelations to support the error of high priests. You have changed the revelations to support the error of a President of the high counselors, etc. You have altered the revelations to support you in going beyond the plain teachings of Christ in the new covenant part of the Book of Mormon. You have changed and altered the revelations to support the error of publishing those revelations in a book; the errors you are in, revelations have been changed to support and uphold them. **YOU WHO ARE NOW LIVING, DID NOT CHANGE THEM, BUT YOU WHO STRIVE TO DEFEND THESE THINGS, ARE AS GUILTY IN THE SIGHT OF GOD AS THOSE WHO DID CHANGE THEM.**" Address to All Believers in Christ, page 49.

It is, therefore, our prayer that as you study and analyze that which we have in our weakness, labored to bring forth for your enlightenment, that you will make it a subject of prayer that God the Eternal Father, through the grace of His Only Begotten Son, Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit, shall lead you into the truth concerning this matter, that you, with all the true believers of the Restoration may not rest under the condemnation of those who rejected His word, as set forth in Section 83:8, of the Doctrine and Covenants given September, 1832:

"And your minds in times past have been darkened because of unbelief, and because you have treated lightly the things you have received, which vanity and unbelief hath brought the whole church under condemnation. And this condemnation resteth upon the children of Zion, even all; and they shall remain under this condemnation until

they repent and remember the new covenant, even the Book of Mormon and the former commandments which I have given them, not only to say, but to do according to that which I have written, that they may bring forth fruit meet for their Father's kingdom," etc.

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