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A HISTORY OF MORMON PERIODICALS

FROM 1830 TO 1838

A Thesis

Presented to the

Department of History

Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

by

Richard G. Moore

December 1983

This Thesis, by Richard G. Moore, is accepted in its present form by the Department of History of Brigham Young University as satisfying the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts.

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INTRODUCTION

At the age of fourteen, a farm boy named Joseph Smith knelt in prayer in a grove of trees near his family's home in New York. His objective was to find out which church was correct in the sight of God. On this early spring morning in 1820, Joseph claimed that he witnessed a heavenly manifestation and found out for himself that none of the religions of the day were true. During the years that followed this "first vision," Joseph reported that he received other remarkable communications from angelic messengers, that he was entrusted with an ancient record inscribed on plates made of gold, and that he translated these writings through the power of God and with the aid of interpreters called the Urim and Thummim. The translated manuscript was published in March of 1830, as the Book of Mormon, which Joseph claimed to be scripture. With the publication of this book he organized a church on April 6, 1830 and became the Prophet and President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[1]

Shortly after the Church was organized a missionary system was established. A revelation received by Joseph Smith in September 1830 instructed Oliver Cowdery, who stood next to Joseph in church government, to journey to Indian territory just west of Missouri "declaring my gospel with the sound of rejoicing."[2] At a Church conference held later that month, Peter Whitmer, Jr., one of the six

original members of the Church, was assigned to be Oliver Cowdery's companion in that mission.[3] Parley P. Pratt and Ziba Peterson, also early converts to Mormonism, were appointed to accompany Cowdery and Whitmer on their mission to the Indians. The four men began their journey in the latter part of October.[4]

Preaching along the way to Missouri, the missionaries stopped in Kirtland, Ohio where they recruited prominent Campbellite preacher, Sidney Rigdon, and part of his congregation.[5] The proselyting success of Mormonism in Ohio together with the harassment suffered by the saints in New York prompted Joseph Smith and many of the New York saints to seek refuge in Ohio. With fifteen hundred to two thousand saints in the area by the summer of 1831,[6] Kirtland soon became a main center of Mormon activity.

The four missionaries had continued on to western Missouri to take the message of the Book of Mormon to the Indians. Another purpose of the mission was to locate a favorable site for the rapidly increasing number of Latter-day Saints to settle.[7] The Jackson County area appealed to the missionaries, who sent letters describing their find to Joseph Smith, who visited the area in July-August 1831.[8] While there, the Prophet pronounced a revelation signifying the land of Missouri as the place the Lord had appointed for the gathering of the saints and "the place for the city of Zion,"[9] a second center for the new church. Independence and Kirtland served as areas for Mormon gathering and settlement.[10] Within a year of the establishment of these new centers of church population, Joseph Smith's followers began publishing periodicals.

This is a study of the periodicals of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or "Mormon" church, from its origin in 1830 to the exile of its members from Missouri in 1839. The Mormons were not unique in publishing their own church periodical. Frank L. Mott calls religious newspapers "a phenomenon of the times," with about a hundred of them scattered over the country by the early 1830's.[11] He also says that as the number of periodicals increased there was a growing tendency toward specialization.

> The religious group was the largest of these classes of periodicals; every denomination and every school of thought within a denomination must have its organ, and many had one for each city or state or region. Thus, each of the leading denominations had a score or more of periodicals--quarterly, monthly, and weekly--before 1860.[12]

In their contemporary context, Mormon papers appear to have been very successful in circulation. In 1833, the New York Courier and Enquirer was the largest newspaper in the country, claiming a circulation of 4,500. Few other papers had half that many subscribers, and the average circulation for secular newspapers was about 1,000.[13] Religious newspapers would have had even fewer subscribers because they specialized and were often published on a local basis.[14] The Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate reported its circulation at about 1,500, far better than the average secular newspaper.[15] The two other religious monthlies published by the Church probably did almost as well, while it is not known how well the Mormon weekly papers were supported. However, before 1839, the life span of each Mormon newspaper was short because of various problems faced by the Church. The longest running of the three monthlies and

the two weeklies published during this time lasted for only three years.

A number of works dealing with Mormon journalism already exist. These include a thesis and several articles by Loy Otis Banks, a thesis by Harrison R. Merrill, and articles by Elbert A. Smith, Virgil V. Peterson, and Heman C. Smith.[16] This thesis is a more in-depth study of the history of the periodicals than those mentioned above, covering a shorter span of time and fewer newspapers. It also delves more into the content of the papers. Since the above-mentioned materials were written, several of the actual newspapers have been discovered. Not available to previous authors, these additional sources have added much-needed information concerning the periodicals. Several one-volume histories of Mormonism were also very helpful for the general context. These include The Mormon Experience by Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, The Story of the Latter-day Saints by James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, and Joseph Smith and the Restoration by Ivan J. Barrett.[17]

In doing this work, letters, journals, and minutebooks have been informative, but the newspapers, themselves, have been the most useful tool for research. The intent of this thesis is to look at the reasons behind Mormon journalism, analyze the content, and give a history of each periodical published by the Church through 1838.

NOTES FOR THE INTRODUCTION

[1]The Pearl of Great Price, "Joseph Smith--History" (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1981), pp. 47-58. Also see Milton V. Backman, Jr., Christian Churches of America (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1976), pp. 149-162.

[2]Book of Commandments (Independence, Missouri: W. W. Phelps and Company, 1833; reprint ed. Independence, Missouri: Herald House, 1972), chapter 30. Cf. Doctrine and Covenants (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1921), Section 28.

[3]Book of Commandments, chapter 32. Cf. Doctrine and Covenants, Section 30, verses 5-8.

[4]Parley P. Pratt, Jr., ed., Autobiography of Parley Parker Pratt, 4th ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950), p. 47. Also see Doctrine and Covenants, Section 32.

[5]Leonard J. Arrington and Davis Bitton, The Mormon Experience (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1979), p. 21.

[6]Ibid. Also see James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1976), pp. 53-56.

[7]T. Edgar Lyon, "Independence, Missouri, and the Mormons, 1827-1833," BYU Studies 13 (Autumn 1972):14.

[8]Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, p. 63.

[9]Doctrine and Covenants, Section 57, verses 102.

[10]Arrington and Bitton, The Mormon Experience, p. 21. Also see Richard Lloyd Anderson, "The Impact of the First Preaching in Ohio," BYU Studies 11 (Summer 1971):474-496; Davis Bitton, "Kirtland as a Center of Missionary Activity, 1830-1838," BYU Studies 11 (Summer 1971):497-516.

[11]Frank Luther Mott, American Journalism, 3rd ed. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1962), p. 206.

[12]Ibid., pp. 321-322.

[13]Ibid., pp. 202-203.

[14]The first edition of the N. W. Ayer and Son's American Newspaper Annual was published in 1880. It only listed the current circulation of newspapers still in existence in 1880. Many of the papers listed began about the same time as the Mormon periodicals that will be discussed, yet still had circulations under 1,500.

[15]Kirtland, Ohio and Far West, Missouri Elders' Journal of the Church of Latter Day Saints 1 (October 1837):15. Hereafter cited as Elders' Journal.

[16]Loy Otis Banks, "Latter-day Saint Journalism" (MA thesis, University of Missouri, 1948); "The Role of Mormon Journalism In the Death of Joseph Smith," Journalism Quarterly 27 (Summer 1950); "The Evening and the Morning Star," Missouri Historical Review 43 (October 1948-July 1949); Harrison R. Merrill, "The Latter-day Saint Press" (MA thesis, Columbia University, 1930); Elbert A. Smith, "Forerunners of the Saints' Herald," Saints' Herald 57 (26 January 1910):80-83; Virgil V. Peterson, "Early Mormon Journalism," Mississippi Valley Historical Review 35 (March 1949):627-638; Heman C. Smith, "Independence Publications," Journal of History 5 (April 1912):144-155.

[17]Arrington and Bitton, The Mormon Experience; Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints; Ivan J. Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, rev. ed. (Provo, Utah: Young House, Brigham Young University Press, 1973).

CHAPTER I

EARLY MORMON JOURNALISM

The Book of Mormon was the first publication of the Mormon Church. Following the 1830 imprint, there has been an almost constant flow of materials published by the Church. Even during the unstable early years of the Church's existence, books and periodicals came off Mormon presses with considerable regularity. In the midst of financial difficulty and through persecutions from without and dissent from within its own ranks, the Church made a determined effort to keep the presses going. From the very beginning of Mormonism, the press has played an important role in the Church's progress and its setbacks.

One of the things that prompted Church leaders to purchase a press in order to publish their own materials was the experience of publishing the Book of Mormon. This initial publishing attempt was hampered by several problems. The Book of Mormon manuscript was completed in June 1829, at which time Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, and Martin Harris set out to get the book printed. Publisher Egbert B. Grandin refused to print the manuscript, as did another printer, Thurlow Weed. Approached a second time and guaranteed three thousand dollars, Grandin agreed to print five thousand copies of the Book of Mormon. Martin Harris consented to pay Grandin the three thousand

dollars within eighteen months after the printing began, and mortgaged his farm to Grandin to insure the deal.[1]

Further problems arose during the printing of the Book of Mormon. The Reflector, a small weekly newspaper, was published from the same office where Grandin was printing the Book of Mormon. The editor of the Reflector, O. Dogberry, Jr., a pseudonym for one Abner Cole,[2] began printing extracts from the Book of Mormon before it had been published. He got his information about the book from discarded proof sheets in Grandin's printing office. Lucy Mack Smith, Joseph's mother, wrote of Cole:

> Upon reading the prospectus of his paper, they found that he had agreed with his subscribers to publish one form of 'Joe Smith's Gold Bible' each week and thereby furnish them with the principal portion of the book in such a way that they would not be obliged to pay the Smiths for it.[3]

Oliver Cowdery and Hyrum Smith, the Prophet's brother, approached Cole and tried to persuade him to discontinue the weekly installments of the Book of Mormon. He ignored their pleas and continued publication of the stolen proof sheets until Joseph Smith came to Palmyra from his home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, and threatened Cole with arrest for copyright infringements.[4]

Following the Cole incident, another problem developed. Grandin stopped publication of the Book of Mormon because some people in the Palmyra area got together and decided to boycott the new book and to try to influence others not to purchase it. After several meetings with Joseph Smith and others, Grandin consented to complete the Book of Mormon if he was given his three thousand dollars. Despite tardy payment on the part of Martin Harris, the Book of Mormon

was completed by March 26, 1830, just eleven days before the Church was organized.[5]

With the Church organized and growing, plans were made for a second edition of the Book of Mormon. Contemplating future editions of the book and recalling the previous publishing difficulties, no doubt influenced Mormon leaders to do their own publishing. The original Literary Firm consisted of the Prophet Joseph Smith, second elder of the Church, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, a former Baptist and Campbellite minister, John Whitmer, one of the eight witnesses of the gold plates, financial backer of the Book of Mormon, Martin Harris, and new convert, W. W. Phelps, a former newspaper editor. Jesse Gause, who would become a member of the Church presidency, was added to the firm, but was replaced in the firm and the presidency by Frederick G. Williams when the disaffected Gause left the Church in 1833. These partners in the firm "were consecrated in their respective responsibilities, and the profits from the sale of the Church publications were to benefit both the individual members as well as the Church at large."[6]

A considerable amount of materials was planned for publication, probably another consideration in the decision to purchase a press. It was decided to establish a school for the Mormon children, with Oliver Cowdery and W. W. Phelps assigned "to do the work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools in this church, . . ."[7] Also to be published was a book of selected commandments and revelations,[8] a revised version of the Bible, with textual additions by Joseph Smith,[9] an almanac,[10] a book of sacred

hymns to be selected by Joseph's wife, Emma,[11] and a Church periodical.[12]

One important reason behind the Literary Firm's desire to print a Church newspaper was to present the public with a positive view of Mormonism, which was lacking at that time. Joseph Smith wrote, "So embittered was the public mind against the truth, that the press universally had been arrayed against us; . . ."[13] The History of the Church records that "many false reports, lies, and foolish stories were published in the newspapers, and circulated in every direction, to prevent people from investigating the work, or embracing the faith."[14] Newspaper editors, community and church leaders united together against the new religion. Anti-Mormon articles were common and as people, embittered for various reasons, left the Church, anti-Mormon journalism became more damaging. Former member of the Church, Ezra Booth, in a series of nine letters to the Ohio Star, gave his reasons for leaving the Mormon faith.[15] These types of articles, published in numerous newspapers, painted a negative picture of Mormonism.

By publishing its own newspaper, the Church hoped to have its side of the story heard. Mormon papers attempted to show the Church in a positive light and to correct erroneous beliefs concerning Mormonism. The Evening and Morning Star told its readers that "many false statements have gone abroad, relative to this church; all of which will from time to time, be corrected if possible."[16] Since most of the subscribers were members of the Church, efforts were made to exchange newspapers with other publishing firms with the hope that

articles published in the Church paper would be reprinted in other periodicals.[17]

After the difficulties in Missouri began, Church leaders were especially determined to keep a newspaper functioning. Reporting the persecutions they suffered in Missouri was a way to bring their plight to the attention of the rest of the nation. Likely, they hoped that by doing this they might gain the sympathy of the country and, possibly, the governmental aid they sought and needed to receive redress. The first two numbers of the Star issued from Kirtland, Ohio dealt almost exclusively with what the editor called "the outrage in Jackson County, Missouri."[18] In the months that followed, many articles were published about the suffering of the saints in Missouri and their need for aid. An appeal was issued from the Mormon press:

> Now, therefore, as citizens of the United States, and leading elders in the church of the Latter Day Saints, residing in the State of Missouri, in behalf of the church, we, the undersigned, do make this solemn APPEAL to the people and constituted authorities of this nation, and to the ends of the earth, FOR PEACE: that we may have the privilege of enjoying our religious rights and immunities and worship God according to the dictates of our own consciences, as guaranteed to every citizen by the constitutions of the National and State governments. . . .
>
> Now we seek peace, and ask our rights, even "redress and redemption," at the hands of the rulers of this nation; not only our lands and property in Jackson county, but for free trade with all men, and unmolested emigration to any part of the Union, and for our inherent right to worship God as we please. . . .[19]

To provide information to Church membership was another purpose the Mormons had for publishing their own newspaper. Mormonism was new and the Church was comprised totally of recent converts to the faith. Many people joined after attending only one meeting where Mormonism was preached, and so, knew little about Church beliefs.

Even those who had learned a few basic doctrines from missionaries actually understood very little because Mormon theology had not yet fully developed. Church doctrine was progressive in the sense that tenets taken from the Bible and the Book of Mormon would be supplemented by communications from God to his prophet. Mormons believed in revelation from God, and that He revealed new knowledge to His people as they became ready for it. For this reason, the Church planned to print books of revelation and instruction, and the Latter-day Saint newspapers were filled with newly received revelations, doctrinal articles, and instructional and inspirational messages from Church leaders.

Many of the revelations that would subsequently become sections of the Doctrine and Covenants were originally printed in the Evening and Morning Star.[20] Also included in the Star were portions of Joseph Smith's retranslation of Genesis.[21] The Star and other Church periodicals published articles about things such as faith,[22] the lost ten tribes of Israel,[23] the last days,[24] and the Millennium.[25] This information was especially important to those members who lived outside the Church headquarters area and did not have the opportunity to hear discourses given by Joseph Smith and other Church leaders. The missionary-minded Latter-day Saints had converted people in many parts of the nation. The Church periodicals became a source of information for them. Along with doctrinal articles and new scripture was news of conferences and Church growth. Even geographic directions for saints traveling to Zion were published for the benefit of Church members scattered throughout the nation, and later, the world.[26]

The Church newspapers were also designed to be a source of information and encouragement to Mormon missionaries. A revelation received by Joseph Smith stated, "Behold, I sent you out to testify and warn the people, and it becometh every man who hath been warned to warn his neighbor."[27] Latter-day Saints viewed themselves as witnesses to the world in two respects. First, they desired to preach the restored gospel to all those who would accept it and become part of the kingdom. Secondly, they believed they were witnesses sent to warn the world of impending judgments and of the second coming of Jesus Christ. Because of these beliefs, the Church has always placed great emphasis upon missionary work.

It was advantageous for the missionaries to place authoritative literature in the hands of the prospective convert.[28] The Book of Mormon was the main missionary tool and was sold or given to those investigating Mormonism. In the first newspaper the Church ever published, editor W. W. Phelps wrote, "There are not a few honest enquiring persons, who wish to know the truth of the Book of Mormon." He continued, "To put them in possession of such testimony as may lead to truth, is our duty, . . ."[29] Mormon newspapers became a tool to aid the missionary work. They not only provided potential converts with information, but also enabled missionaries to explain new, sometimes difficult to understand, Church dogma.

Elders (missionaries) were encouraged to obtain subscribers for Church newspapers.[30] Church members were also instructed to use the periodicals as a missionary tool: "If each patron of the Star would obtain another subscriber, they would, by that means, advance

the spread of truth, and many who are now ignorant of the gospel might come to a knowledge of the glories of the last days."[31]

Besides providing information and clarifying Church doctrine, the Mormon press bore witness of the truthfulness of the new religion to strengthen the faith of its members. Letters and articles reporting the success of the missionaries built the saints' confidence in their religion and their leaders. This was especially important during the trying times of the Missouri persecutions and in the era of unrest within the Church in Ohio. An article in the Star demonstrated that true believers in Christ had always been persecuted; a sign to Mormons that they must have the truth for they, too, were being persecuted.[32] Features on the progress of the Church reported the rapid growth of Mormonism, a factor many Church members associated with the truthfulness of their religion.[33]

Two other factors ought to be considered. Most of the early converts to Mormonism could read and write. The opportunity of receiving a monthly magazine devoted almost entirely to their new religion appealed to many Church members, as witnessed by the letters sent to the periodicals and by the number of those who subscribed. One letter stated, ". . . it rejoices our hearts & feasts our souls, to hear through the medium of your Star, the success of our brethren who are also laboring in the vineyard, . . ."[34] Another letter requested two new subscriptions and reported, "The Evening and the Morning Star is doing much good here."[35] In addition, other early Church members were gifted in editing, printing, and writing essays, articles, and poetry. The Church newspapers provided these people a vehicle through which they could demonstrate their skills.

The Mormons recognized early the power of the printed word. Essentially, the objectives in issuing Church periodicals were to clarify doctrine, strengthen the faith of the Church, provide elders with a missionary tool, and produce positive publicity about Mormonism. Church leaders' reasons for doing their own publishing were to avoid the difficulties of dealing with an outside publisher and the cost of printing all the materials planned for publication. Having discussed the reasons and objectives behind Mormon journalism, subsequent chapters will focus on each of the periodicals respectively.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER I

[1]Ivan J. Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, p. 114.

[2]Peter Crawley, "A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972):472.

[3]Lucy Mack Smith, History of Joseph Smith (Salt Lake City: Stevens and Wallis, 1945), p. 164.

[4]Russell R. Rich, "The Dogberry Papers and the Book of Mormon," BYU Studies 10 (Spring 1970):319.

[5]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, p. 116.

[6]Lyndon W. Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith (Provo, Utah: Seventy's Mission Bookstore, 1981), pp. 112-113.

[7]Doctrine and Covenants, section 55, verse 4.

[8]Joseph Smith, Jr., History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev., 7 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1932-1951), 1:221-222. Hereafter cited as HC.

[9]Nauvoo, Illinois Times and Seasons 5 (1 January 1845):754. Hereafter cited as Times and Seasons.

[10]"Far West Record," p. 26.

[11]Doctrine and Covenants, section 25, verse 11.

[12]Times and Seasons 5 (1 April 1844):481.

[13]HC 1:273.

[14]HC 1:158.

[15]B. H. Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1930; reprint ed., Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1965), 1:265-267.

[16]Independence, Missouri and Kirtland Ohio Evening and the Morning Star 1 (March 1833):n.p. Hereafter cited as EMS.

[17]EMS 1 (September 1832):n.p.

[18]EMS 2 (December 1833):118. A number of articles with the title "The Outrage In Jackson County, Missouri" appeared in the Star beginning in the issue mentioned above.

[19]EMS 2 (August 1834):183-184; also see The Evening and the Morning Star Extra, August 1834, Brigham Young University, Special Collections.

[20]Robert Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1974), p. 19.

[21]Robert J. Matthews, A Plainer Translation: Joseph Smith's Translation of the Bible (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1975), p. 50.

[22]A series entitled, "Faith of the Church of Christ in These Last Days," began in the EMS 2 (February 1834):130 and was continued into the Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate.

[23]EMS 1 (October 1832):n.p.

[24]EMS 1 (February 1833):n.p.

[25]A series about the Millennium began in the EMS 2 (December 1833):117 and was continued in the Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate.

[26]EMS 1 (December 1832):n.p.

[27]Doctrine and Covenants, section 88, verse 81.

[28]Samuel George Ellsworth, "A History of Mormon Missions in the United States and Canada, 1830-1860" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1951), p. 40.

[29]EMS 1 (June 1832):n.p. The use of the Book of Mormon as a missionary tool is discussed in Anderson, "The Impact of the First Preaching in Ohio," pp. 474-496. It is also mentioned in Milton V. Backman, Jr., "The Quest for a Restoration: The Birth of Mormonism in Ohio," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972):363-364.

[30]EMS 1 (July 1832):n.p.; EMS 1 (December 1832):n.p.

[31]EMS 2 (May 1834):160.

[32]EMS 1 (June 1832):n.p.

[33]In frequent articles such as "The Progress of the Church of Christ," the growth of the Church was reported. See EMS 2 (June 1833):100.

[34]EMS 1 (May 1833):n.p.

[35]EMS 2 (June 1833):100.

CHAPTER II

THE EVENING AND THE MORNING STAR

Leaders of the newly formed Church of the Latter Day Saints believed that the press was universally arrayed against their new religion. Articles and editorials attacking or making light of the Book of Mormon, Mormonism, and its founder, Joseph Smith, were common during 1830 and 1831. Even E. B. Grandin, the eventual publisher of the first edition of the Book of Mormon, wrote, "It is pretended that it [the Book of Mormon] will be published as soon as the translation is completed."[1]

It is likely that the amount of negative press the Church was receiving, coupled with the desire of Church leaders to communicate with Mormon converts scattered around the nation, prompted the Church to publish its own periodical. Plans had already been made for the printing of hymn books, school books for children, a compilation of revelations and other items.[2] The Literary Firm must have reasoned that a press could also be used for the printing of a newspaper that would portray the Church in a positive light and be a vehicle of information for the saints.

William W. Phelps was a poet-journalist from Hanover, New Jersey. He gave up his position as editor of the Ontario Phoenix, an anti-Masonic publication in New York, and moved to Kirtland, Ohio, where he joined the Mormon Church.[3] Recognized for his experience as

an editor and his ability as an organizer, Phelps was called in June of 1831 to assist Oliver Cowdery "to do the work of printing, and of selecting and writing books for schools in this church, . . ."[4] In July of that same year, W. W. Phelps was "established as a printer unto the church" with Oliver Cowdery to assist him.[5]

At a conference, 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 . . ."[6] In February 1832, a prospectus was published for a periodical to be entitled the Evening and the Morning Star.[7]

The publication was given the name Evening and the Morning Star because "as the forerunner of the night of the end, and the messenger of the day of redemption, the Star will borrow its light from sacred sources, and be devoted to the revelations of God . . ."[8] The prospectus of the Star was especially millennialistic in nature, speaking of all the foretold happenings of the last days and declaring that "not only the day but the hour is at hand for all to be fulfilled." Phelps stated that the Star would contain "whatever of truth or information that can benefit the saints of God temporally as well as spiritually, in these last days, without interfering with politics, broils, or the gainsayings of the world."[9]

On May 29, 1832 the leading Church officials in Missouri met in the office of the Evening and the Morning Star for a dedicatory service of the new establishment. After an invocation and the reading of several appropriate commandments by John Whitmer, W. W. Phelps made some explanatory remarks concerning the rules and regulations of the

office and the important responsibility of spreading the truth to the inhabitants of the earth. He was followed by Bishop Edward Partridge, who "proceeded solemnly to dedicate the building for printing and all materials pertaining thereto unto the Lord."[10] The office and print shop of W. W. Phelps and Company was located in a two-story brick building on Liberty Street in Independence, Missouri.[11]

The Star would be a sixteen page newspaper, printed on a royal quarto sheet (6½ x 9 inches) in brevier type with two columns per page and would be issued monthly. Subscription price was one dollar per year, with anyone signing up ten subscribers receiving their own paper free for one year.[12]

The first number of the Star came off the press in June 1832. It contained several revelations and excerpts of revelations, including what would become sections 20 and 45 of the Doctrine and Covenants. Section 20 was published in the Star as "Articles and Covenants of the Church of Christ" and contained commandments, doctrine, and general rules of conduct for Church members. The article which would become section 45 was about the last days, the final judgment, and the destruction of the wicked. Also included in the first issue were messages from Church leaders to the membership of the Church, excerpts from the Book of Mormon, sections entitled "Selections," "News," "Worldly Matters," and "Foreign News," and a selection of hymns, several written by W. W. Phelps, himself.[13]

The Star did run some items typical of contemporary newspapers, but even these were seasoned with Mormonism. It is clear from the beginning that Phelps was publishing a religion-oriented periodical. He wrote:

> Under the head of 'Selections' we intend to furnish the disciples with well-written articles from celebrated authors, that they may be enabled to judge between right and wrong; between the Church of Christ and the church of man, and set an example worthy of imitation.

The content under "Worldly Matters" was to be general news "as may enable the saints to know the condition of the world." Phelps used current events to illustrate the wickedness of men, the approaching destruction of the world, and the nearness of the advent of Christ. Number one carried articles on the alarming number of murders in the United States, small pox and cholera epidemics, wars, and a terrible storm.[14] The second issue again reported war and international strife, and the earth sweeping plague of cholera, along with news of a comet to appear later that year.[15] War and disease were again the topic of "Worldly Matters" in the third edition.[16] Star number four further detailed the effects of cholera in the world and reported more murders in the nation.[17] News of an earthquake appeared in the October issue.[18] Other secular articles printed in the Star were informational fillers rather than news of current events. Items such as tables of population,[19] a description of Lake Superior,[20] and a remedy for vomiting[21] were common in the Star.

Joseph Smith received his first copy of the Star in July and was apparently very pleased with the paper, referring to it as "a joyous treat to the saints." He continued:

> Delightful, indeed, was it, to contemplate, that the little band of brethren had become so large, and grown so strong, in so short a space as to be able to issue a paper of their own, which contained not only some of the revelations, but other information also,--which would gratify and enlighten the humble enquirer after truth.[22]

In the issues that followed, W. W Phelps kept the content and format essentially the same. In addition to the revelations published, he included a section of selected articles, usually of a religious nature. A portion of the Star was often reserved for letters from church members, generally missionaries, reporting their experiences and successes in the mission field. Phelps's editorials were often gospel discourses or explanations of how current events related to the signs of the last days. Selected hymns or poetry continued to be a regular feature.

By the time the fifth issue was published in October 1832, there had evidently been some complaints concerning the lack of foreign news in the Star. Phelps wrote, "should any thing transpire abroad, more than ordinary, it shall be noticed, but . . . the Star, hereafter, will contain more matter for the edification and benefit of the soul, . . ." The news of the day was to be published in Phelps's weekly paper, the Upper Missouri Advertiser.[23]

Though the Evening and the Morning Star was begun under the direction of the Literary Firm, comprised of Church officials, W. W Phelps had been assigned to be the editor and was given freedom as to what he printed. The Firm did comment on what was printed and made suggestions. In a letter to Phelps dated January 14, 1833, Joseph Smith wrote in regards to the monthly:

> We wish you to render the Star as interesting as possible, by setting forth the rise, progress, and faith of the church, as well as the doctrine; for if you do not render it more interesting, than at present, it will fall, and the church suffer a great loss thereby.[24]

Phelps took the Prophet's suggestions to heart and accepted the challenge to improve the newspaper. In the March 1833 issue he wrote,

"With our present arrangement and intention, we hope to publish more original matter in the second volume, than we have in the first."[25]

One of the original materials Phelps planned to include in the Star was Joseph Smith's revision of the Bible, or the "New Translation." Joseph put a halt to that idea in a letter to the brethren in Missouri dated March 21, 1833. He wrote:

> It is not the will of the Lord to print any of the New Translation in the Star; but when it is published, it will all go to the world together; in a volume by itself; and the New Testament and the Book of Mormon will be printed together.[26]

Another idea that Phelps began in the June 1833 issue was the serialization of the Book of Mormon in the Star. He wrote:

> . . . very few of our fellow men in the world, know anything about the merits of this sacred volume. We therefore, have concluded to commence its publication in the Star, and shall continue from number to number until it is finished.

This introduction was followed by the first three chapters of the Book of Mormon.[27] In the following month's paper, he wrote that it had been decided to discontinue the serialized printing of the book because of the plans to publish the New Testament and the Book of Mormon and bind them in one volume in the near future, "therefore to continue it in the Star would be superfluous."[28]

When the ideas mentioned above did not materialize, Phelps made further efforts to improve the quality of the Star's content. Historical articles such as "Rise and Progress of the Church of Christ" and other additions appear to have been successful. In a letter to the leaders of the Church in Zion (Jackson County, Missouri), the First Presidency of the Church wrote, "We feel gratified with the way which Brother William W. Phelps is conducting

the Star at present, we hope he will render it more and more interesting."[29]

As an organizer, Phelps was gifted, but his ability as an editor was questionable. Regarding Phelps's editorial skills, Apostle George A. Smith wrote:

> Joseph asked my opinion of W. W. Phelps as an editor. I told him that I considered Phelps the sixth part of an editor, and that was the satirist. When it came to the cool direction necessarily entrusted to an editor in the control of public opinion—the soothing of enmity, he was deficient, and would always make more enemies than friends; but for my part, if I were able, I would be willing to pay Phelps for editing a paper, providing no body else should have the privilege of reading it but myself. Joseph laughed heartily--said I had the thing just right. Said he, "Brother Phelps makes such a severe use of language as to make enemies all the time."[30]

George A. Smith was likely referring to Phelps's editorials concerning slavery. When the saints first moved into the Jackson County area, the old settlers paid little attention to them. But the differences between the Mormons and the old settlers were soon apparent and began to cause a growing division between the two groups. One of the most glaring differences concerned the issue of slavery. The Missourians were mostly from the southern states and firmly believed in the practice of slavery. The Mormons who had come to Missouri were, for the most part, from the North. Most Church members did not share the same appreciation for slavery felt by the old residents of Missouri.[31]

In July 1833, the Star ran an article entitled, "Free People of Color." Phelps had apparently heard of a number of blacks who had joined the Church and were planning to move to Missouri. He wrote:

> To prevent any misunderstanding among the churches abroad, respecting Free people of color, who may think of coming to

> the western boundaries of Missouri, as members of the church, we quote the following clauses from the Laws of Missouri.

He then listed sections four and five of the Missouri State Laws which stated that no person of color could enter or be brought into the state unless he was a citizen of another state and could prove that citizenship with the proper documents. Phelps then went on to say:

> Slaves are real estate in this and other states, and wisdom would dictate great care among the branches of the church of Christ, on this subject. So long as we have no special rule in the church, as to people of color, let prudence guide; and while they, as well as we, are in the hands of a merciful God, we say: Shun every appearance of evil.[32]

The article was fairly harmless, but the title was an exceptionally poor choice of words. "Free People of Color" sounded like an appeal for abolition, even the suggestion of which inflamed Southern anger. It is entirely possible that only a very few of the early settlers even read the article. The title was enough to upset many of the non-Mormon locals. Those who did read the entire article may have been somewhat pacified had it not been for an editorial comment made by Phelps later in the same issue:

> As to slaves we have nothing to say. In connection with the wonderful events of this age, much is doing towards the abolishing slavery, and colonizing the blacks, in Africa.[33]

Although the majority of old settlers may not have seen the article, the idea of Mormon pro-black sentiment was probably spread by word of mouth. Some of the Missourians believed that Phelps had offered an open invitation to free blacks everywhere to come to Missouri.[34] Hearing of the animosity caused by his article, Phelps issued a Star Extra on July 16, 1833 in an attempt to clear up any misunderstanding. The "Extra" stated:

> Having learned with regret, that an article entitled FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR, in the last number of the Star, has been misunderstood, we feel in duty bound to state, in this Extra, that our intention was not only to stop free people of color from emigrating to this state, but to prevent them from being admitted as members of the church. . . .
>
> We often lament the situation of our sister states in the south, and we fear, lest, as has been the case, the blacks should rise and spill innocent blood: for they are ignorant, . . . we are opposed to have free people of color admitted into the state; and we say, that none will be admitted into the church, . . .[35]

The "Extra" had little or no effect on the old settlers, even though Phelps had not only said that Mormons would keep blacks from coming into the state, but had stated, contrary to Church policy, that blacks would be forbidden membership in the Church. Mormon opponents circulated a statement of their complaints against the saints on July 18 which accused the Star of "inviting free negroes and mulattoes from other states to become Mormons and remove and settle among us." The document concluded with this warning:

> We, therefore, agree, that if after timely warning, and receiving an adequate compensation for what little property they cannot take with them, they refuse to leave us in peace, as they found us, we agree to use such means as may be sufficient to remove them, and to that end we pledge to each other our bodily power, our lives, fortunes, and sacred honors.[36]

On July 20 approximately 500 men gathered at the courthouse in Independence. A committee selected from the group was appointed to write a report of charges against the saints and a list of demands to be met by the Mormon people in Jackson County. One of the demands was that W. W. Phelps close his office and discontinue the business of printing.[37] Another committee was selected to deliver the charges and demands to the Mormon leaders and see that the saints strictly complied with the requirements. The Mormon leaders asked for time to

consider the proposition. Upon receiving no specific reply to their ultimatum, the committee returned to the courthouse where it was unanimously decided to raze the printing office to the ground.[38]

> In a short time, hundreds of the mob gathered around the printing office, . . . which they soon threw down. The press was thrown from the upper story, and the aparatus [sic], book work, paper, type, &c., &c., scattered through the streets.[39]

Acts of violence continued over the next several months until the Mormons were forced to leave Jackson County during November 1833.[40] In the midst of the Missouri persecutions, arrangements were made to re-establish publication of the Evening and the Morning Star in Kirtland, Ohio, at least on a temporary basis. On September 11, 1833 Joseph Smith met in conference with leaders of the Church in Kirtland and Oliver Cowdery, representing the saints in Missouri to

> consider the expediency of establishing a printing press in Kirtland, when it was resolved unanimously, that a press be established, and conducted under the firm of F. G. Williams & Co. Resolved, that the above firm publish a paper, as soon as arrangements can be made, entitled the "LATTER-DAY SAINTS' MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE." Resolved, also, that the Star, formerly published in Jackson County, Missouri, by the firm of W. W. Phelps & Co. be printed in this place by the firm of F. G. Williams & Co.; and be conducted by Oliver Cowdery, one of the members of the [literary] firm, until it is transferred to its former location.[41]

At a council meeting held October 10, 1833 in Kirtland it was decided to discontinue the building of the temple in Kirtland during the winter months, and "to set the hands immediately to erect a house for the printing office." The building was to be "thirty by thirty-eight feet on the ground [,] the first story to be occupied for the school of the prophets that winter, and the upper story for the printing press." Oliver Cowdery had gone to New York with eight hundred dollars to purchase a press and other printing equipment.

Mormon leaders were determined to publish a newspaper again as quickly as possible:

> There will be as many hands employed upon the house as can work, and every exertion made to get the printing into operation, and publish the Star, commencing from the last number printed; . . . (until an opportunity offers to transfer it again to Zion, to be conducted by W. W. Phelps and Co., as usual,). . . . The probability is, that the Star will be forwarded to subscribers by the first of December. Oliver has written to you for the names and residence of the subscribers for the Star, and if you have not sent them, we wish you to send them immediately, that there may be no delay in the papers going to subscribers as soon as they can be printed.[42]

After returning to Kirtland, Oliver Cowdery wrote to his brother, Warren, "I found my press, &c. in Buffalo, but when they will be received here to me is uncertain, . . ."[43] The newly appointed editor was making plans for his newspaper long before the press arrived in Kirtland:

> We intend, with the blessings of the Lord & the prayers of the Saints, to have the "Star" enriched with valuable information from the churches, as we shall be favored with the reports from the Elders, as well as Essays upon doctrine, & scriptures, the signs of the times, &c.
>
> We trust through the blessing of the Lord, that such a Publication will not be uninteresting to the Saints . . .[44]

By the first part of December 1833 the printing office was ready to begin publication. On December 6, Joseph Smith wrote:

> Being prepared to commence our labors in the printing business, I ask God, in the name of Jesus, to establish it forever, and cause that his word may speedily go forth to the nations of the earth to the accomplishing of his great work, . . ."[45]

In a meeting held on December 18, the new press was dedicated. Of that occasion Joseph wrote:

> The elders assembled in the printing office, and bowed down before the Lord, and dedicated the printing press and all that pertained thereunto, to God, by mine own hand, which

> dedication was confirmed by Elder Rigdon, and my brother, Hyrum Smith--We then proceeded to take the first proof sheet of the "Star" edited by Elder Oliver Cowdery.[46]

Oliver Cowdery had been a trusted friend of Joseph Smith since they met in April of 1829. Oliver had acted as a scribe for the Prophet Joseph during the translation of the Book of Mormon. He had been one of the six original members when the Church was formed on April 6, 1830, and he would later hold the position of Assistant-President of the Church.[47]

Fourteen issues of the Evening and the Morning Star had been published in Independence, Missouri: number fourteen being printed in July 1833. Volume two, number fifteen was printed five months later in Kirtland, Ohio. In the first issue from Kirtland, Oliver Cowdery explained to Star subscribers why there had been such a delay in publication. He reviewed the prospectus of W. W. Phelps and added his own personal views on what he felt the content of the Star should be. He wrote:

> . . . on the subject of controversy, we will here remark, that whenever we may deem it of any real benefit to our fellow men, to enter the field against our opponents in principles upon the subject of our faith, we shall be at liberty so to do, always observing the strictest rules of decorum and respect, toward every individual who may controvert the principles of religion with us.

Cowdery went on to say that he felt it was his duty to relate the shocking scenes of persecution which took place in Missouri which had robbed the saints of their basic freedoms.[48]

To make the public aware of the wrongs suffered in Missouri was probably the primary reason Church leaders were so determined to re-establish a press so quickly. Beginning with the first issue of the Star published in Kirtland, much space was devoted to the Mormon

hardships in Missouri. A copy of a petition sent to Governor Daniel Dunklin of Missouri was printed. Also included in the first paper was a list of demands and charges issued to the saints, along with several accounts of mob violence, including the destruction of the press.[49]

Each issue that followed contained articles dealing with the problems faced by the Mormons in Missouri. Cowdery printed a Star Extra in February 1834 concerning the Missouri crisis. In a letter written February 10, 1834, Cowdery stated, "I received a long circular, or handbill, this evening from Zion, written by our brethren in that country and printed; I shall have it set out, and sent, Extra Star."[50] The "Extra" published in February was a reprint of the handbill Cowdery had received from Missouri, written by Parley P. Pratt.[51]

Because so much of the newspaper was used each month in reporting the Missouri happenings, the editor felt the need to justify giving so much space to the subject. In the June 1834 edition Oliver Cowdery wrote:

> Perhaps our friends may think that we devote too large a portion of the Star to the subject of the Jackson outrage, . . . but facts disclose themselves almost daily which serve to confirm previous statements, that those professing the religion of heaven, were equal coadjutors in this grand rebellion and this high handed treason against the general government; and are now lurking in every place where they can hope to have influence, . . .[52]

Cowdery continued to write editorials concerning the matter and also published letters from saints in Missouri, as well as letters from Missouri citizens and from Governor Dunklin.

Some changes were made in the Kirtland Star. Cowdery did away with news and worldly matters, but increased the number of letters

from Church members and added more doctrinal articles. He began publishing a series of articles that continued from one issue to the next. These were doctrinal articles with such titles as "Faith of the Church of Christ in These Last Days," "The Prophecy of Zephaniah," and "Millenium."[53] Cowdery added Church business, including notices of future conferences, minutes of meetings, messages from Church leaders, and excommunications. He published appropriate articles from other periodicals and continued the policy of printing original poetry and hymns. He also added an obituary column.[54]

In September 1834 the second volume of the Star came to an end. It was supposed to be temporarily published in Ohio until the problems in Missouri were solved, at which time publication of the Star would transfer back to Independence, and Kirtland would print its own newspaper. With the unfolding of events in Missouri, it appeared that it would be some time before the Star could resume publications there. The September issue stated:

> As the Evening and the Morning Star was designed to be published at Missouri, it was considered that another name would be more appropriate for a paper in this place; consequently, as the name of this church has lately been entitled the church of the Latter Day Saints, and since it is destined, at least for a season, to bear the reproach and stigma of this world, it is no more than just, that a paper disseminating the doctrines believed by the same, and advocating its character and rights, should be entitled "MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE."[55]

The Star would never resume publication. A new paper, the Messenger and Advocate, took its place in Kirtland, and the Mormons were never able to regain their holdings in Jackson County. As the supply of the previously published issues of the Star dwindled, it was

decided to reprint both volumes. The concluding number of the Star carried a prospectus for the reprints:

> F. G. Williams and Company will reprint the first and second volumes of the Star, in octavo form, commencing in the month of November, next, at two dollars for the two volumes, payable in advance. They pledge themselves to furnish their subscribers with, at least, two numbers per month, until the whole are completed, and . . . when finished, will be in beautiful form for binding, . . .[56]

The first reprint issue appeared in January 1835.[57] Oliver Cowdery conducted the reprinting of the paper. The Kirtland reprints of the Star were somewhat different from the originals. The form in which they were printed was altered to that of the Messenger and Advocate and the name of the paper was changed from the Evening and the Morning Star to the Evening and Morning Star. Some of the content was also changed. The original prospectus of the Star was added to the first reprint issue. Some hymns were added to the reprints and several articles and poems were deleted from the originals. Most of the original items remained intact, though much of the material was rearranged in the reprints.[58]

There were numerous textual changes in the Star reprints. Of particular interest were changes made in the revelations from the way they first appeared in the old Star. Concerning those corrections Oliver Cowdery wrote:

> There are many typographical errors in both volumes, and especially in the last, which we shall endeavor carefully to correct, as well as principle, if we discover any.--It is also proper for us to say, that in the first 14 numbers, in the Revelations, are many errors, typographical, and others, occasioned by transcribing manuscript; but as we shall have access to originals, we shall endeavor to make proper corrections.[59]

Concerned that people might not understand why the revelations were altered, Cowdery again explained in the first Kirtland reprint of the Star:

> On the revelations we merely say, that we were not a little surprised to find the previous print so different from the original. We have given them a careful comparison, assisted by individuals whose known integrity and ability is uncensurable. Thus saying we cast no reflections upon those who were entrusted with the responsibility of publishing them in Missouri, as our own labors were included in that important service to the church, and it was our unceasing endeavor to have them correspond with the copy furnished us. We believe they are now correct. If not in every word, at least in principle.[60]

The Evening and the Morning Star was the first Mormon periodical published. Issued under the direction of the Church, it was the official organ of Mormonism. It helped develop the ability of the Church to publish and blazed the way for subsequent Latter-day Saint periodicals.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER II

[1]Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," p. 471.

[2]Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 112-113.

[3]Richard Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, "The Joseph/Hyrum Smith Funeral Sermon," BYU Studies 23 (Winter 1983):4; Walter Dean Bosen, "The Versatile W. W. Phelps--Mormon Writer, Educator, and Pioneer" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1958), p. 26-28.

[4]Doctrine and Covenants, section 55, verse 4.

[5]Ibid., section 57, verses 11-13.

[6]Times and Seasons 5 (1 April 1844):481.

[7]Times and Seasons 5 (15 August 1844):609-611.

[8]Ibid., p. 609.

[9]Ibid., pp. 609-611.

[10]"Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," 29 May 1832. Microfilm copy at Brigham Young University, Special Collections. Hereafter cited as "Journal History."

[11]Banks, "The Evening and the Morning Star," p. 320.

[12]EMS 1 (June 1832):n.p.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Ibid.

[15]EMS 1 (July 1832):n.p.

[16]EMS 1 (August 1832):n.p.

[17]EMS 1 (September 1832):n.p.

[18]EMS 1 (October 1832):n.p.

[19]EMS 1 (August 1832):n.p.; EMS 1 (September):n.p.

[20]EMS 1 (October 1832):n.p.

[21]EMS 1 (September 1832):n.p.

[22]Times and Seasons 5 (2 September 1844):626.

[23]EMS 1 (October 1832):n.p.

[24]Times and Seasons 5 (1 December 1844):720.

[25]EMS 1 (March 1833):n.p.

[26]Times and Seasons 5 (1 January 1845):754.

[27]EMS 2 (June 1833):98-99.

[28]EMS 2 (July 1833):109.

[29]Times and Seasons 6 (15 February 1845):801.

[30]Van Wagoner and Walker, "The Joseph/Hyrum Smith Funeral Sermon," p. 5. Also see HC 5:390-391.

[31]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, p. 239.

[32]EMS 2 (July 1833):109.

[33]Ibid., p. 111.

[34]EMS 2 (December 1833):114.

[35]EMS Extra (16 July 1833). A copy of this "Extra" is located in Brigham Young University, Special Collections. Also see HC 1:378-379.

[36]EMS 2 (December 1833):114. Also see William Alexander Linn, The Story of the Mormons (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1902), pp. 170-172.

[37]HC 1:398.

[38]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, pp. 246-249.

[39]Times and Seasons 1 (December 1839):18.

[40]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, pp. 263-265.

[41]Times and Seasons 6 (1 April 1845):850.

[42]Times and Seasons 6 (15 April 1845):864-865.

[43]Oliver Cowdery to Warren Cowdery, 30 October 1833, Cowdery Letterbook, microfilm copy in Brigham Young University Library.

[44]Oliver Cowdery to Ambrose Palmer, 30 October 1833, Cowdery Letterbook.

[45]Times and Seasons 6 (1 June 1845):915.

[46]Times and Seasons 6 (1 July 1845):947.

[47]Stanley R. Gunn, Oliver Cowdery: Second Elder and Scribe (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., 1962), p. 124.

[48]EMS 2 (December 1833):113.

[49]Ibid., pp. 114-115.

[50]Oliver Cowdery to S. W. Denton, 10 February 1834, Cowdery Letterbook.

[51]Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," pp. 486-487.

[52]EMS 2 (June 1834):167.

[53]A series of articles entitled "Millenium" began in the EMS 2 (December 1833):117. Both "Faith of the Church of Christ in These Last Days" and "The Prophecy of Zephaniah" series began in EMS 2 (February 1834):130-131 and 132-134.

[54]EMS 2 (December 1833):117.

[55]EMS 2 (September 1834):185.

[56]Ibid., p. 192.

[57]Richard P. Howard, Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development (Independence, Missouri: Herald Publishing House, 1967), p. 201.

[58]Crawley, "A Bibliography of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," pp. 494-496.

[59]EMS 2 (September 1834):192. Offering an explanation for some of the changes made in the revelations, Richard P. Howard states: "Joseph Smith, Jr. and three others were commissioned by the General Assembly of September 24, 1834, to select items and prepare copy for the second attempt to publish a record of some of the revelations of God to the elders of the church. It seems likely that, as Joseph Smith made his selections from these documents, he would have authorized the production of a specific manuscript for the 1835 printer's use. The likelihood of this is seen in the totally different order of the documents found in both publications. This

would have given him a splendid opportunity to further revise, expand, and elucidate that which had formerly been stated, especially in view of the valuable experiences of the Independence colonization attempt, the administrative growth of the church generally, and his own personal theological development." Howard, Restoration Scriptures, p. 202.

[60] EMS (reprint) 1 (January 1835):16. For detailed information concerning the changes made in the revelations see Robert J. Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants; Melvin J. Petersen, "A Study of the Nature of the Significance of the Changes in the Revelations as Found in a Comparison of the Book of Commandments and Subsequent Editions of the Doctrine and Covenants (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1955); and the book by Richard P. Howard cited in note number 57.

CHAPTER III

THE LATTER DAY SAINTS' MESSENGER AND ADVOCATE

After completing the second volume of the Evening and Morning Star in Kirtland, editor Oliver Cowdery decided to conclude the Star and issue another paper in its stead entitled The Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate. The prospectus of the new paper was printed in the last issue of the Star under the heading "Address to the Patrons of The Evening and Morning Star." In his prospectus, Cowdery wrote:

> As the Evening and Morning Star was designed to be published at Missouri, it was considered that another name would be more appropriate for a paper in this place; consequently, as the name of this church has lately been entitled the church of the Latter Day Saints, and since it is destined, at least for a season, to bear the reproach and stigma of this world, it is no more than just, that a paper disseminating the doctrines believed by the same, and advocating its character and rights, should be entitled "Messenger and Advocate."[1]

The Messenger and Advocate was to be printed on the same size sheet as the Star, but "in octavo form, for the more easy and convenient purpose of binding."[2] The price of a subscription was one dollar per year, to be paid in advance, and as with the Star, "every person procuring ten new subscribers, and forwarding $10, current money, shall be entitled to a paper one year, gratis."[3]

Oliver Cowdery, editor of most of the second volume of the Evening and Morning Star, continued his editor's role in the Messenger and Advocate. Of his new paper he wrote:

> With our present arrangements, owing to the increase of members to the church of the Latter Day Saints, and the frequent communications from the faithful laborers in the Lord's vineyard, we hope to render the Messenger and Advocate more interesting and important than the Star has ever been; and for the accomplishment of this glorious and laudable object, we not only solicit the aid and ability of the wise, but a deep interest in the prayers of all the saints.[4]

The first number of the Messenger and Advocate was issued in October, 1834. In his opening address, Cowdery made a few remarks concerning the editorial policy he would pursue. He wrote of the opposition to the Church and of his determination to spread the truth abroad. Concerning controversy over religious matters, he wrote:

> . . . we cannot but deem it unsafe for men to enter the field of controversy against their opponents in principle, except they are assured of the correctness of their own system: this would be dangerous; and to avoid the evil arising from such an order of things, we shall not attempt to correct others upon the principles of salvation, not knowing firstly that our foundation is sure.[3]

The Messenger and Advocate, like the Star under Oliver Cowdery's direction, was essentially a tool to inform and instruct the saints. It was comprised mainly of doctrinal articles, moralizing editorials, and letters from Church members. Articles about current events were very rare. Cowdery did include an occasional item of moral value from other periodicals or an article that had been published which was critical of Mormonism.

The first issue of the Messenger and Advocate contained correspondence from John P. Greene, Eli Gilbert, Sylvester Smith, and Oliver's brother, Warren Cowdery. Also printed in that first paper

was an obituary column, an apology for the delay in printing the paper, and a letter from Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps. Of particular importance was the last letter mentioned for it began a series of letters written to Phelps that would contain the first published account of the origin of the Mormon Church.[6]

The second number of the Messenger and Advocate continued several lengthy articles that began in the Evening and Morning Star. No author had been named for any of the three series printed. In his prospectus, Cowdery stated "that no communication, whatever, will be inserted except the name of the author is given, that it may follow his respective piece."[7] In accordance with that policy the second issue of the new paper contained the following:

> Our patrons will remember, that we notified all correspondents, sometime since, that each article would appear over its proper signiture [sic]. Up to the present, we have heard no dissatisfaction expressed, and presume that the arrangement is such as meets the minds and judgement of our friends.
>
> For a considerable length of time we have published pieces on the "millenium; Faith of the church, and the Gospel." As we expect these subjects will be discussed farther, it is only necessary for us to say, that they are from the pen of our worthy brother and friend, S. Rigdon, one of the Presidents of the church of the Latter Day Saints.[8]

The belief that the second coming of Christ was imminent was known as Millennialism. It was commonplace by the early nineteenth century and helped spark the Second Great Awakening. Formerly a Baptist and a Campbellite, Sidney Rigdon had long been a believer in the nearness of the Savior's second advent.[9] Rigdon's articles about the Millennium began as an attack on his former mentor, Alexander Campbell's newspaper, the Millennial Harbinger. He was especially

critical of the writings of a Mr. M'Corkle, a contributing author of the Harbinger. In the first article, Rigdon wrote:

> Within the last five years, a writer has made his appearance, professing it to be his primary object, to investigate this subject; and actually commenced publishing a paper, calling it the, "Millenial Harbinger." From his high standing as a man of talents, and a biblical student, from his pen we expected much; but, in this we have been disappointed; for we have received but little; indeed, less than little; we have received nothing.[10]

Rigdon's attack was likely spurred by Campbell's negative writings about Mormonism and a possible professional jealousy between the two preachers.

Rigdon, himself, said very little about the Millennium for the first three installments of the series, but continued his written assault:

> For several years we have been waiting and reading the "Millennial Harbinger," and finding a little of every thing in it which has been written or spoken of, for the last hundred years, the Millennium excepted; that, as though its Harbinger was ashamed of it, has never as yet been able to find a place in its columns, so as to pay one visit to its friends. How long it will be kept in this solitary situation, remains to be disclosed in futurity; or whether the Editor of the Harbinger was really in earnest when he put MILLENNIAL, on the title page of his paper; or whether he designed to practice a hoax on its readers, time will doubtless bring to light. Or perhaps the Editor understands the subject too well, to let it appear in his paper, believing if he does, that it will sap the foundation of all that he has done, and been doing for the last twenty years. . . .
>
> The ears of the public are occasionaly [sic] saluted from that press with the great imposition . . . of Mormonism: But why not Mr. Editor, when you are engaged in detecting impositions, say something about the most bare faced imposition ever pawned upon this generation, the Milenial [sic] Harbinger?[11]

Beginning with the fourth article and throughout the rest of the series, Rigdon expounds from the scriptures the events leading up to the second coming of Christ and the conditions of the Millennium.

There were, altogether, fourteen installments of the "Millennium" article, eight segments of the series entitled "The Gospel," and the serial, "Faith of the Church," concluded after appearing in ten issues.

Much of the space of each newspaper was taken up by letters. W. W. Phelps wrote long letters to Cowdery for publication. Cowdery's reply was not sent in a personal letter to Phelps, but was published and sent in the newspaper. Letters from missionaries became too numerous and were often too long to be printed in their entirety, so a summary was prepared and published by the editor.

In the eighth number of the Messenger and Advocate, Cowdery included two lectures on theology that had been presented to the school of the prophets the previous winter.[12] These lectures, seven in all, were subsequently revised and printed in the first edition of the Doctrine and Covenants, under the title, "Lectures On Faith."[13] The two lectures Cowdery published in the Messenger and Advocate were numbers five and six, dealing with the Godhead (the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit), and the knowledge a person must have to pursue a course of life in accordance to the will of God.

Cowdery was the editor of the first eight issues of the Messenger and Advocate. On December 5, 1834, Joseph Smith made Oliver Cowdery an assistant president of the Church.[14] His increased responsibilities obliged him to give up his position as editor of the paper. In an address to the patrons of the newspaper he wrote:

> It is proper for me to inform you, that in consequence of other business and other duties, in which my services are requisite, my editorial labors on this paper will close with the present number; . . ."

He then announced that the new editor of the monthly would be John Whitmer, who had just arrived at Kirtland from Missouri.[15]

John Whitmer had become acquainted with Joseph Smith before the Church was organized. He had assisted Oliver Cowdery as a scribe to Joseph during the latter part of the translation of the Book of Mormon.[16] Whitmer was one of the eight witnesses of the gold plates from which Joseph translated the book.[17] He accompanied Joseph on several trips as a missionary and had been given positions of leadership in the Church. Whitmer was appointed to be Historian of the Church in March, 1831 by a revelation given through Joseph Smith:

> Behold, it is expedient in me that my servant John should write and keep a regular history, and assist you, my servant Joseph, in transcribing all things which shall be given you, until he is called to further duties. . . .
>
> And again, I say unto you that it shall be appointed unto him to keep the church record and history continually; for Oliver Cowdery I have appointed to another office.[18]

Having worked with Whitmer for a number of years and knowing his ability to write, Oliver Cowdery selected Whitmer to take his place as editor of the Kirtland paper. The first paper published under Whitmer's direction was number nine, the June 1835 issue. On assuming editorship of the Messenger and Advocate, he wrote:

> The labors of this station, to those acquainted with them, are known to be many and complicated; the responsibility resting upon an individual who steps forward in our religious country, at this day, and assumes to teach others the gospel of the Lord Jesus, and point the path to holiness, is fraught with so many reflections of importance, that one would scarce venture forward without faltering, were it not for the fact, that good may be done, the field being wide, the harvest great and the laborers few.[19]

He went on to say, "In this introduction, then, I take occasion to say, that I shall not labor to please men, any farther than a relation of sacred principles will be satisfactory." He then requested all

former correspondents to continue to write their columns and the elders to keep sending accounts of their travels and experiences to the paper.[20]

Few changes were made in the format of the paper under the new editor. Whitmer did add a hymn section and did not continue Oliver Cowdery's policy of giving the name of the author with every article printed. From the first issue that Whitmer edited, there were articles written and simply signed with the boldface initials "C" and "P." In later issues some articles appeared with the initials "R" and "W" following. In his diary, Oliver Cowdery wrote that he had attended the dedication of the Lord's house and that the particulars of that great event could be found in an "account written by myself, and printed in the March No. of The Messenger and Advocate, signed C."[21] From the initials, styles of writing, and other clues, it is not difficult to guess that the other authors were W. W. Phelps (P), Sidney Rigdon (R), and Warren Cowdery (W).

Though Cowdery had given up the editorship, he continued to do much writing for the paper. He wrote editorial-type comments, doctrinal articles, and reported on Church conferences. W. W. Phelps, living in Kirtland at the time, also did a substantial amount of writing for Whitmer's Messenger and Advocate, including many hymns.

The August edition was "delayed beyond the ordinary time of publication, on account of finishing the printing of the Doctrine and Covenants."[22] With few other problems, the first volume of the Messenger and Advocate ended with the September 1835 issue. The first number of the second volume was also delayed, this time due to "a multiplicity of business, abscence [sic] of some of our hands and the

illness of others, . . ." Following an apology for the delay was a notice requesting all persons who had not paid for their subscription to make payment.[23]

The first issue of volume two carried another request for Church members and missionaries to send

> information they may have, relative to the spread of the truth; the number of members in each branch; the additions from time to time; their growth in grace; their daily walk, and standing, and whatever else that may be of service to the cause: that we may all be edified of all, . . ."[24]

In the December 1835 issue of the monthly were five articles about the Mormons from contemporary newspapers, all contained in a letter written by W. W. Phelps. Each of the five articles were negative, depicting the saints as fanatics or a militant force preparing to attack Jackson County, believing that if they were killed in battle, Joseph would raise them from the dead.[25] A New York paper reported the building of the temple in Kirtland:

> That bold-faced imposter, Joe Smith, of Gold Bible and Mormon memory, has caused his poor fanatic followers to erect on the shores of Lake Erie; near Painesville, (Ohio) a stone building 58 by 78 feet with dormer windows, denominating the same the "Temple of the Lord." We should think this work of iniquity extorted out of the pockets of his dupes, as it reflects its shadows over the blue lake, would make the waters crimson with shame at the prostitution of its beautiful banks to such unhallowed purposes.[26]

Probably the item of most interest in the December issue was an article by Oliver Cowdery concerning a number of mummies that had been discovered in Egypt and brought to the United States. Three scrolls of papyrus were found with the mummies and brought to Joseph Smith in July of 1835 to see if he could translate them. Michael H. Chandler, the owner of the mummies, was shown to his satisfaction that Joseph could decipher the ancient characters.[27] Before Chandler left

Kirtland, a group of gentlemen, Mormon and non-Mormon, purchased the mummies and the papyrus scrolls and gave them to Joseph Smith. Joseph believed the scrolls to contain writings of Abraham and Joseph of Egypt.[28] The article by Cowdery described the papyrus scrolls and some of the hieroglyphics depicted on them. Cowdery went on to say:

> When the translation of these valuable documents will be completed, I am unable to say; neither can I give you a probable idea how large volumes they will make; but judging from their size, and the comprehensiveness of the language, one might reasonably expect to see a sufficient to develop much upon the mighty acts of the ancient men of God, and of his dealing with the children of men when they saw him face to face.[29]

The February edition of the Messenger and Advocate must have been issued much later than usual. In his apology to subscribers, Whitmer lists the reasons for its delay as pressures of business, want of paper, and "the preparation and attendance of the solemn assembly dedication of the house of the Lord."[30] The Kirtland Temple, the house of the Lord mentioned above, was dedicated on March 27, accounting for a substantial delay of publication.

The March issue carried a summary of the proceedings of the temple dedication. The ceremony consisted of speeches by Sidney Rigdon, Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery, and the dedicatory prayer, given by Joseph Smith and printed in its entirety in the March paper. Several unusual events which occurred at the dedication were also reported. Brigham Young and David W. Patten, members of the Twelve, spoke in tongues, and Frederick G. Williams gave an account of witnessing an angel during the ceremonies. Also printed with the summary were the words of several original hymns by W. W. Phelps and Parley P. Pratt, sung at the dedication.[31]

Besides the temple dedication, number six of volume two carried John Whitmer's farewell address as editor of the Church periodical. At a meeting held on April 2, John Whitmer and W. W. Phelps were released from their responsibilities and membership in the Literary Firm. Phelps had been in charge of publishing hymn books and the Doctrine and Covenants. He and Whitmer planned to return to Missouri where their families were still residing. They were to take with them five hundred copies of the Doctrine and Covenants and five hundred hymn books for the saints in Missouri.[32] In his closing address, Whitmer wrote, ". . . in consequence of other business, and other duties which call my immediate attention, my labors in the editorial department of this paper must cease for the present; . . ." He also expressed his gratitude for the increase of subscribers to the monthly newspaper.[33] John Whitmer did cite the Messenger and Advocate in his history of the Church, but he did not mention the role he played in its publication. After nine months under Whitmer's direction, the newspaper returned to the hands of its original editor, Oliver Cowdery.

In his first issue after taking over, Cowdery published two pieces dealing with the slavery controversy: a letter from Joseph Smith and an article entitled "The Abolitionists." Extremists, primarily in the North, had begun a movement to abolish slavery. Though growing in numbers, abolition was not yet a popular movement in any part of the nation. Abolitionists were threatened and attacked in both the North and the South. The editor of an abolitionist newspaper in Illinois was murdered by a mob in 1837.[34] The Church had missionaries in the South, some of whom were opposed to slavery and

expressed their opinions openly. With much of the public mind already prejudiced against the Church, siding with the abolitionists would further damage its changes for popular acceptance. Recalling the problems aroused by W. W. Phelps's article on slavery, Cowdery was much more cautious about what he printed.

Joseph Smith's letter was sympathetic to the interests of the South, if not pro-slavery. He desired to "correct the opinions of the southern public" concerning the Church's stand on slavery:

> I am aware, that many who profess to preach the gospel, complain against their brethren of the same faith, who reside in the south, and are ready to withdraw the hand of fellowship because they will not renounce the principle of slavery and raise their voice against every thing of the kind.
> . . . I do not believe that the people of the North have any more right to say that the South shall not hold slaves, than the South have to say the North shall.

Joseph cited passages from the Bible that illustrated that there was nothing evil about owning servants, and he concluded his letter by saying that the missionaries had no right to "interfere with slaves contrary to the mind and will of their masters." He reasoned that it would be better to not bother with the slaves until their masters were converted and then, "teach the master to use them with kindness, remembering that they are accountable to God, . . ."[35]

The author of "The Abolitionists," probably Oliver Cowdery, supported the plan proposed by an anti-slavery faction to purchase the slaves and then set them free, "providing they would place them upon some other continent than ours." Though critical of abolitionists and the idea of emancipation, the author was also sympathetic to the plight of the slaves: "It was an inhuman thing to tear a people of another color from their friends and homes, and bring them to a

strange land, and cause them to endure the toils of servitude; . . ."[36] Both Joseph's letter and the article on abolitionists reveal the desire of the authors to avoid persecution by keeping in line with the main stream of public opinion. They were also written to help pacify bitter feelings and to improve relations between members and potential members of the Church, North and South.

Beginning when the paper was still edited by John Whitmer and concluding in the newspaper under Oliver Cowdery's directions was a series of letters between Sidney Rigdon and a Mr. O. Barr. It began as, what appeared to be, a sincere investigation of the Church by Mr. Barr. He expressed some doubts and asked specific questions about Church doctrine, concluding with "if you, or any of your people can, and will answer my honest objections to your theory, I shall become a Mormon."[37] The original letter was addressed to Barr's brother, a member of the Church. Rigdon chose to answer his letters and submitted both inquiries and replies for publication. He began in a congenial manner, "I can say that it is with a degree of pleasure, that I avail myself of the opportunity of forming an acquaintance with a stranger, by investigating an item of our holy religion, . . ."[38] The correspondence between the two men continued, but deteriorated into a heated debate in print when Barr admitted that he did not believe in the need for a restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ because it was all contained in the New Testament. He then went on to point out what he felt to be inconsistencies in Rigdon's understanding and expressed his astonishment that a "teacher in Israel should make statements so opposite to bible truth, . . ."[39] In reply, Rigdon wrote that he was surpised and disappointed at the letter he had

received. As Rigdon continued, the letter became a scathing rebuttal, criticizing Barr's knowledge of scripture, and even his grammer. Rigdon concluded, ". . . I feel myself insulted by being brought into contact with such a man and the correspondence between you and I closes."[40]

In June of 1836 Frederick G. Williams retired from the Literary Firm and the following notice appeared in the newspaper:

> The undersigned inform all whom it may concern that the firm of F. G. Williams & Co., is this day, by mutual consent, dissolved; and that all debts due the said firm must be paid immediately to Mr. Cowdery, who has purchased the entire establishment, and will be responsible for all debts due from the same.[41]

Beginning with the June issue, Oliver became both editor and proprietor of the Messenger and Advocate. During his second term as editor, and especially after becoming owner of the print shop, much of the editorial work was done by his brother, Warren A. Cowdery.[42] Oliver and Warren faced financial problems with the printing office, primarily because of the increase of people subscribing to the paper, but not paying for it. Hoping to get the newspaper out of economic trouble, a plea was made to all people owing money to the paper to please pay their debts. The deadline of October first was given to have all payments made or "be stricken from our subscription list, except at our discretion."[43] In the August edition, the Cowdery's repeated the warning:

> We feel to repeat what we then said, and also to add, that the next number of our paper closes the present volume, and although our present subscription list is large and still increasing, yet without payment it is more onerous for us to bear.
>
> Our Elders abroad, who have procured for us many of our patrons, will accept our grateful acknowledgement for the interest they have taken for us, and still remember, that it

> is in their power to do us good by making collections of such subscribers as they may have procured for us and become responsible at the office for the amount of their subscription.
>
> We hope that where there is no elder or other responsible person by whom remittances can be made to us, some individual in each branch of the church, where our paper is now sent, will have the goodness to collect and forward to us the amount due in each branch, ... Let the old adage, "out of sight, out of mind," be for once reversed, and our pecuniary embarrassments cease.[44]

On June 29, 1836, a committee of Clay County citizens met in Liberty, Missouri. The committee issued a report that contained reasons for conflict between the Mormons and the old settlers, and urged the Mormons to leave the area to prevent bloodshed. The proceedings of the meeting were printed in the Far West, a Liberty newspaper. In response to this article, the Presidency of the Church wrote a letter to the committee mentioned above and published the letter in July as a Messenger and Advocate Extra. The Missouri Mormons had already decided to relocate and had informed the Church leaders in Kirtland of their decision. The Presidency wrote:

> We have no doubt but our friends will leave your country, sooner or later,—they have not only signified the same to us, but we have advised them so to do, as fast as they can without incurring too much loss. It may be said that they have but little to lose if they lose the whole. But if they have but little, that little is their all, . . .[45]

Financial problems for the newspaper continued as the second volume came to an end with the September issue. Oliver Cowdery was touring the East for a few weeks and left Warren in charge of the paper. Warren announced to subscribers that those who did not send subscription money for the third volume or who had not made a special contact to that effect by the first week in October could expect to have their names stricken from the subscription list.[46]

The prospectus for the third volume of the Messenger and Advocate was printed on individual sheets and distributed to the Elders to help them sell subscriptions. It was also published in the first number of the third volume in October, 1836. Excerpts form the prospectus follow:

> The present (Sept.) No. closes this volume; and considering the weight of influence and determined opposition, against which it has been compelled to contend, its circulation has become extensive—towns, counties and states, have, through the medium of this little sheet, learned our views and principles on the subject of the gospel of the son of God; . . . .
>
> . . . The Messenger will contain such notices of the spread of the gospel, and the preaching of the elders, as will be interesting, from time to time, besides such articles upon the subject of religion, as may be furnished by them; by means of we hope to justify a liberal support . . . We had designed publishing it semi-monthly, but owing to the fact that a great portion of our former subscriptions are unpaid, and some owe for the Star, published four years since, we cannot carry our wishes into effect.[47]

The third volume followed the basic formula of the first two; letters, theological articles, editorial comments and notices of public interest. Most of the articles about religion were written by the Cowdery brothers and Sidney Rigdon. Joseph Smith contributed little to the content of volume three, likely because of business pressures and several journeys that took him away from his home in Ohio.

In an attempt to do better financially, Oliver expanded the services of the printing shop. The name was changed to the Kirtland Printing Office and Bookbindery. It was owned by Oliver Cowdery and Company, "dealers in books, stationery, cap, letter, and wrapping paper." They also advertized job printing, such as hand-bills, show-bills, notes and checks, and they re-bound old books.[48]

The January 1837 issue was late being printed and sent to subscribers. In Warren Cowdery's apology, he did not make it clear exactly why the publication was delayed:

> Our readers need not be told that the publication of our paper has been delayed this month, longer than is usual for us;--longer by far than we could have wished. Yet it has not been for want of paper, it was not for want of compositors, nor for want of a pressman; but, still, there were a combination of causes not in our power to control, which operated to prevent our humble selves from seasonably preparing the articles to fill its columns.[49]

A notice in the February issue announced that the printing establishment had again changed hands and that the newspaper had a new editor:

> The late firm of O. Cowdery & Co. is this day dissolved by mutual consent. The entire establishment is now owned by Joseph Smith, Jr. and Sidney Rigdon.
>
> W. A. Cowdery takes the editorial chair, and in matters of business relative to the Messenger and Advocate, or any other pertaining to their printing office or book bindery, acts as their agent.[50]

Warren Cowdery had been functioning as acting-editor for a number of previous issues. Upon taking over the full responsibilities of editor, he wrote:

> It shall be our endeavor to instruct rather than amuse, and if light is reflected on our understandings, we shall cheerfully and fearlessly disseminate it. If in our editorial labors we shall at any time be led astray and be instrumental in propagating error, we hope our brethren, will have that confidence in us, that they are errors of the head and not of the heart.
>
> . . . From our enemies we neither look for sympathy nor kind feelings, and if we should be so fortunate as to discover either, we shall be free to extend the hand of peace, and own we have been for once, disappointed.

Cowdery stated that the periodical was intended to be a "faithful chronical of events that transpire in building up and establishing the kingdom of God in these last days." He invited missionaries to send

letters relating experiences and other information that would be "most interesting to the saints, and tend most to edify and build them up in the most holy faith, . . ." All communications were to be accompanied with a responsible name, "that every man may have that just need of praise from a generous public which his talents merit."[51]

Before the April edition was printed, the printing office had a new owner, William Marks.[52] It appears that the financial burdens of Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon were too great for them to keep the paper going. Marks provided the financial backing needed to continue, at least for awhile. He purchased the printing office and bindery, but gave Joseph and Sidney the power of attorney to act as his agents in dealing with the printing business. Warren Cowdery continued as editor.[53]

Though a June date appears on a particular issue of the Messenger and Advocate, Warren Cowdery informed the public that "a train of causes, and a combination of circumstances, not in our power to control, have operated to prevent our issuing our paper in the month of June." One of the primary circumstances mentioned was the lack of money needed to publish the newspaper. Cowdery continued, "We have till recently, had laborers enough at our control, but now we are destitute, or nearly so."[54] The economy of Kirtland was suffering, as was much of the nation. The financial difficulties of the saints, and particularly Church leaders, would be a major factor in the abandonment of Kirtland as a Church center.

As Kirtland's population grew, Church leaders felt there was a need to establish a banking institution. There were few banks in the western part of the United States in the 1830's and no national

currency. A local bank could provide currency, a safe depository, a source of credit, and help transform land assets into liquid cash.[55] Plans were made to create a bank in Kirtland, and stock in the proposed institution was sold. On November 2, 1836, a meeting was held to draw up a "constitution" and establish the Kirtland Safety Society Bank. The preamble and fourteen articles adopted at that meeting were published in December in a Messenger Extra.[56]

Orson Hyde was sent to Columbus to obtain a charter for the Safety Society from the Ohio Legislature. Oliver Cowdery traveled to Philadelphia to purchase engraved plates for the printing of the bank's notes. Oliver returned with the plates, but Orson Hyde was not able to obtain a charter.[57] According to the Messenger and Advocate, the stockholders of the Kirtland Safety Society met again on the second day of January, 1837, to alter the previously designed constitution because of their inability to procure a banking charter.[58] This was probably done at the suggestion of legal counsel to change any aspect of the Safety Society or wording of the original constitution that might make it illegal as an unchartered bank.

The old constitution was annulled, and a new constitution was adopted, creating the Kirtland Safety Society Anti-Banking Company. In connection with the revised "Articles of Agreement of the Kirtland Safety Society" printed, Joseph Smith wrote for the newspaper:

> I beg leave to make a few remarks to all those who are preparing themselves, and appointing their wise men, for the purpose of building up Zion and her Stakes. It is wisdom and according to the mind of the Holy Spirit, that you should call at Kirtland, and receive counsel and instruction upon those principles that are necessary to further the great work of the Lord, and to establish the children of the Kingdom, according

> to the oracles of God, as they are had among us. And further, we invite the brethren from abroad, to call on us, and take stock in our Safety Society.[59]

Establishing the Kirtland Safety Society without a charter was an unwise move on the part of Mormon leaders. There existed a general uneasiness towards banks during this time, especially small banks because of their often small reserves. The unchartered Kirtland Safety Society received bad publicity from area newspapers. Banks would not accept Safety Society notes and some people feared doing business with the Kirtland bank because of the risk of losing their money, as well as the possibility of being fined $1,000 because of a conceivable legal infraction.[60] Originally, it was supported with unusual loyalty by the people of Kirtland, especially considering the risks involved. But the lack of confidence in its notes by other banking establishments caused a run on the bank and by the end of January, the Safety Society suspended payments on its own notes.[61]

Efforts were made to save the Kirtland bank, but by then, most of the saints had lost confidence in it and were wary of its notes. Wilford Woodruff wrote in his diary:

> He [Sidney Rigdon] also stated that the Presidency had used every means for the deliverance of the Church but as many of the Church had refused Kirtland currency which was their temporal salvation. In consequence of this they put their strength in the hands of their enemies & those that had done this thing must suffer by it.[62]

In February, some of the stockholders of the Kirtland Safety Society, including Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon, were charged with having violated an Ohio law of 1816 that prohibited the conduct of banking business without authorization. Eventually, charges were

dropped for all but Joseph and Sidney. They were brought to trial in October, found guilty, and fined $1,000 each.[63]

The spring of 1837 saw a banking panic begin in New York and sweep the nation. In May, every bank in Ohio suspended payments as the economic crisis spread westward. In June, Joseph Smith resigned his office in the Safety Society, disposed of his interests, and withdrew from the institution;

> being full aware, after so long an experiment, that no institution of the kind, established upon just and righteous principles for a blessing not only to the Church but the whole nation, could be suffered to continue its operations in such an age of darkness, speculation, and wickedness.[64]

Disenchanted with the whole banking venture, Warren Cowdery wrote an editorial in the July Messenger and Advocate. He began:

> It is a well known and established fact, that in the latter part of the year 1836 a bank, or monied institution, was established in this place. . . . It was considered a kind of joint stock association, and that the private property of the stockholders was holden in proportion to the amount of their subscription, for the redemption of the paper issued by the bank. No charter was obtained for the institution, which operated as one cause to limit the circulation of the bills, destroy public confidence in them, and stimulate the holders of them to return them again to the bank and demand the specie for them. Other banks which had been at the expense of procuring chargers, refused the bills of this bank in payment of any debts due their respective institutions.

Cowdery was not only critical of the Kirtland bank, but of the people behind its beginning. Many of the saints were angry with Joseph Smith because of the bank failure and became bitter towards the Church. Warren Cowdery appears to have been at odds with the prophet, also. His editorial continued:

> . . . the two first officers of the bank resigned, sold out their interest and withdrew from the institution. All banks throughout the country, one after another suspended specie payment. Some of them were as illy able to continue when they stopped as was ours, but they had charters, were

> popular and waited till it was popular to suspend payment, and then they could do so with impunity whether they had five or five thousand to redeem their paper. . . .
>
> . . . If we give all our privileges to one man, we virtually give him our money and our liberties, and make him a monarch, absolute and despotic, and ourselves abject slaves or fawning sycophants. . . . Whenever a people have unlimited confidence in a civil or ecclesiastical ruler or rulers, who are but men like themselves, and begin to think they can do no wrong, they increase their tyranny, and oppression, establish a principle that man, poor frail lump of mortality like themselves, is infallible. Who does not see a principle of popery and religious tyranny involved in such an order of things?

Cowdery went on to say that the people who started the bank were not bankers or financiers and knew little about banking. He said that banking was a science as much as trade or business or law, and that

> a man may be an eminent civilian, and know nothing of consequence of the principles of medicine. He may be a celebrated divine, and be no mechanic no financier, and be as liable to fail in the management of a bank as he would in constructing a balloon or the mechanism of a watch if he had never seen either.[65]

Warren Cowdery's editorial was critical of Church leaders, Joseph Smith in particular; an attitude in Kirtland not unique to Cowdery.

From its origin, the religious beliefs of Mormonism had set it apart from Christian orthodoxy; a major factor in its lack of popularity with the masses in the country, and more especially in areas where the saints settled. In addition, some of the Mormons who lacked an understanding of Church doctrine "engaged in spiritual and hysterical excesses" which contributed to the negative public opinion of Mormonism.[66] Latter-day Saint dissidents united with anti-Mormons to further alert the public mind to the evils of Mormonism and spur the already growing contempt for the Church. With Mormon political support of the Democratic party, a conflict arose between the Whigs and the Mormons. The rumor of plural marriage being practiced by

Joseph Smith and the economic failure of the Kirtland Safety Society struck damaging blows within the Church and resulted in widespread apostasy.[67]

In Kirtland, criticism of Joseph Smith was "voiced in the streets and in the secret chambers.[68] In May of 1837, Joseph Smith wrote:

> The enemy abroad, and apostates in our midst, united in their schemes, . . . and many became disaffected toward me as though I were the sole cause of those very evils I was striving against, and which were actually brought upon us by the brethren not giving heed to my counsel.
>
> No quorum in the church was entirely exempt from the influences of those false spirits who are striving against me for the mastery; even some of the Twelve were so far lost to their high and responsible calling, as to begin to take sides, secretly, with the enemy.[69]

The division within the Church in Kirtland became very serious, with men in the highest offices of Mormonism speaking out against the prophet. The Church was divided into factions, one group headed by John and David Whitmer and the Cowderys. According to Joseph's mother, dissenters held secret meetings at the home of David Whitmer, and "circulated a paper in order to ascertain how many would follow them, and it was found that a large number of the Church was disaffected."[70]

Warren Cowdery's editorial was an attack on Joseph Smith and his fallibility as a leader: "Whenever a people have unlimited confidence in a civil or ecclesiastical ruler or rulers . . . and begin to think they can do no wrong, they [the rulers] increase their tyranny, and oppression, . . . "[71]

Warren Parrish and Frederick G. Williams took over management of the bank after Joseph resigned.[72] Fearing that Parrish and others

might be mishandling funds and operating the bank solely for personal gain, Joseph cautioned the public in the August issue of the paper:

> To the brethren and friends of the church of Latter Day Saints, I am disposed to say a word relative to the bills of the Kirtland Safety Society Bank. I hereby warn them to beware of speculators, renegadoes and gamblers, who are duping the unsuspecting and the unwary by palming upon them, those bills, which are of no worth, here. I discountenance and disapprove of any and all such practices. I know them to be detrimental to the best interests of society, as well as to the principles of religion.[73]

An editorial in another Church newspaper later accused Parrish of embezzlement:

> He had the handling of large sums of money, and it was soon discovered, that after the money was counted and laid away, and come to be used and counted again, that there was always a part of it missing; this being the case, repeatedly, and those who owned it, knowing that there was no other person but Parrish who had access to it, suspicion of necessity fixed itself on him.[74]

Parrish made some accusations of his own, implicating Joseph Smith with mismanagement and dishonesty.[75] One study of the Safety Society's stock ledger book states that there are irregularities in the ledger, but that these irregularities do not suggest dishonesty on the part of anyone.[76] It has also been suggested that if Parrish had taken $25,000, it would have been in worthless bank notes, because "that amount of specie in the vault would have saved the bank, . . ."[77]

Handicapped by its lack of a charter and not being able to survive the depression and the scandals, in November of 1837, the Kirtland Safety Society closed its doors.[78] It was probably Warren Cowdery's editorial about the Kirtland banking venture, offensive to Church leaders, that brought the end of the Messenger and Advocate. Seeing apostasy all around him, Joseph Smith did not want an enemy for

the Church newspaper's editor. It does not appear that Warren Cowdery was fired from his job as editor. More likely, he was reprimanded and questioned as to his loyalties, and then voluntarily relinquished his position. Joseph Smith wrote, "As the Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate . . . is to be closed with the present volume . . . the publishers of that paper have declined publishing any more for the present, at least."[79] Cowdery said, in the last issue of the paper, ". . . we now resign our charge . . ."[80]

With Warren Cowdery leaving at the end of the third volume of the paper, it was decided to end that newspaper completely and start anew. In the last two numbers of volume three, a prospectus was published for a new periodical to be called the Elders' Journal. Apparently not sure whom to trust, Joseph Smith name himself as editor of the forthcoming publication.[81]

Warren Cowdery's "Valedictory" appeared in the final issue of the Messenger and Advocate. He stated that he may not have had the talent of his predecessors, but that he had never shrunk from the responsibility of his station. Of Joseph, he wrote:

> To our successor in the editorial chair we say, though he may have more of talent, more of popularity than we possess, more will justly be required of him, all his talents, all his popularity, will have to be put in requisition to manage the ship across the tempestuous sea that lies before him. We most ardently wish him a prosperous voyage and safe mooring in the haven of everlasting rest.[82]

With the publication of the September issue, the third volume was completed and the Latter day Saints' Messenger and Advocate came to an end.

NOTES FOR CHAPTER III

[1]EMS 2 (September 1834):185.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Kirtland, Ohio Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate 1 (October 1834):16. Hereafter cited as MA.

[4]EMS 2 (September 1834):185.

[5]MA 1 (October 1834):2.

[6]Peter Crawley, "A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972):494.

[7]EMS 2 (September 1834):185.

[8]MA 1 (November 1834):25-26.

[9]Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, pp. 12-13.

[10]EMS 2 (December 1833):117.

[11]EMS 2 (January 1834):126-127.

[12]MA 1 (May 1835):122-126.

[13]N. B. Lundwall, compiler, A Compilation Containing the Lectures On Faith (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, Inc., n.d.), p. 4.

[14]HC 2:176.

[15]MA 1 (May 1835):120.

[16]Andrew Jenson, Latter-day Saint Biographical Encyclopedia, 4 vols. (Salt Lake City: Andrew Jenson History Co., 1901-1937), 1:251-252.

[17]The testimony of the eight witnesses can be found in the preface to the Book of Mormon.

[18]Doctrine and Covenants, Section 47.

[19]MA 1 (June 1835):135.

[20]Ibid., pp. 136-137.

[21]Leonard J. Arrington, "Oliver Cowdery's Kirtland, Ohio, Sketch Book," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972):426.

[22]MA 1 (August 1835):176.

[23]MA 2 (October 1835):203.

[24]Ibid., p. 202.

[25]MA 2 (December 1835):231.

[26]Ibid., p. 232.

[27]Ibid., p. 235.

[28]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, pp. 333-334.

[29]MA 2 (December 1835):236.

[30]MA 2 (April 1836):272.

[31]MA 2 (March 1836):274-281.

[32]HC 2:434.

[33]MA 2 (March 1836):285-286. It is not known what the circulation for the paper was at this time. At the end of three years of publication, the Messenger and Advocate had a circulation of approximately fifteen hundred, according to the Elders' Journal, 1 (October 1837):16.

[34]Samuel Eliot Morison, The Oxford History of The American People (New York: Oxford University Press, 1965), p. 518.

[35]MA 2 (April 1836):289-291.

[36]Ibid., pp. 299-301.

[37]MA 2 (February 1836):258.

[38]Ibid.

[39]MA 2 (June 1836):321-325.

[40]Ibid., pp. 326-329.

[41]Ibid., p. 329.

[42]MA 3 (September 1837):569.

[43]MA 2 (June 1836): 330.

[44]MA 2 (August 1836):364-365.

[45]Messenger and Advocate-Extra, 25 July 1836. Copy in Brigham Young University Library.

[46]MA 2 (September 1836):378.

[47]MA 3 (October 1836):385.

[48]MA 3 (January 1837):448.

[49]Ibid.

[50]MA 3 (February 1837):458-459.

[51]Ibid.

[52]According to HC 2:486n, the first time William Marks is mentioned in Church History is in relation to his purchase of the printing office. Nothing is known of his career previous to this time. Andrew Jenson's LDS Biographical Encyclopedia, vol. 1, states that Marks was born 15 November 1792 in Rutland, Vermont. He was chosen to be a member of the Kirtland High Council and later became the president of the Nauvoo Stake of Zion. He left the Church after the martyrdom of Joseph Smith, and at the time of his death, Marks was a first counselor to Joseph Smith III in the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

[53]MA 3 (April 1837):496.

[54]MA 3 (June 1837):520.

[55]Marvin S. Hill, C. Keith Rooker, and Larry T. Wimmer, "The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics," BYU Studies 17 (Summer 1977):432-433.

[56]Messenger and Advocate-Extra, (December 1836). Copy in Brigham Young University Library.

[57]Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer, "The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics," pp. 433-434.

[58]MA 3 (January 1837):441.

[59]Ibid., p. 443.

[60]Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer, "The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics," p. 435.

[61]Ibid.

[62]Dean C. Jessee, "The Kirtland Diary of Wilford Woodruff," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972):394.

[63]Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer, "The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics," p. 434.

[64]HC 2:497.

[65]MA 3 (July 1837):535-541.

[66]Max H. Parkin, "The Nature and Cause of Internal and External Conflict of the Mormons in Ohio Between 1830 and 1838" (MA thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966), p. 345.

[67]Ibid., pp. 346-350.

[68]Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, p. 210.

[69]HC 2:488. Also see Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, p. 211.

[70]Smith, History of Joseph Smith, p. 243.

[71]MA 3 (July 1837):538.

[72]D. Paul Sampson and Larry T. Wimmer, "The Kirtland Safety Society: The Stock Ledger Book and the Bank Failure," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972):432.

[73]MA 3 (August 1837):560.

[74]Elders' Journal of the Church of Latter Day Saints 1 (August 1838):57.

[75]Donna Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon (Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Company, Inc., 1977), p. 214.

[76]Sampson and Wimmer, "The Kirtland Safety Society: The Stock Ledger Book and the Bank Failure," p. 436.

[77]Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History, 2d ed., rev., and enl. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., 1971), p. 198; Hill, p. 213.

[78]Hill, Rooker, and Wimmer, "The Kirtland Economy Revisited: A Market Critique of Sectarian Economics," p. 434.

[79]MA 3 (September 1837):571-572.

[80]Ibid., p. 569.

[81]Ibid., pp. 571-574.

[82]Ibid., p. 571.

CHAPTER IV

THE ELDERS' JOURNAL

The Latter Day Saints' Messenger and Advocate concluded with the September 1837 issue. Anticipating the end of its publication, a new periodical, to be called the Elders' Journal, was planned. The Mormons were facing financial difficulties because of the failure of the Kirtland Safety Society and because of the depression of 1837 that had swept the nation. In order to publish a newspaper, a large group of Church members unitedly rented the printing establishment, which was still owned by William Marks.[1]

The prospectus for the Journal was written by Sidney Rigdon, and printed in the August and September issues of the Messenger and Advocate. Rigdon wrote that the new paper was to be a "vehicle of communication for all the elders of the church of Latter Day Saints, through which they can communicate to others, all things pertaining to their mission, . . ." The Journal was clearly intended to focus on the missionaries much more than had the previous periodicals. The prospectus stated that after reading the experiences of the elders, those who might be slothful, "will be provoked to good works, by hearing of the zeal, and of the great exertions of others, in extending the work of God." Rigdon calculated that with missionaries in England and the United States, it could be expected that the paper would be

> enriched with important intelligence from the eastern as well as the western continent, and at no very remote period we may anticipate with great assurance, to see its columns abounding with matter of deep interest, from all nations in the civilized world.

With reporters stationed in every part of the world, Rigdon believed the Journal could obtain information that would make it "equal, if not superior" to any publication in the United States. He urged every saint to help obtain "as extensive a circulation for the paper as possible."[2]

The Elders' Journal was to be published on the same press and in the same place as its predecessor. Rather than continuing the Messenger and Advocate, Joseph Smith appears to have wanted to make a clean break from the previous newspaper, probably because of disagreements with that paper's editor, Warren A. Cowdery. Cowdery had criticized the Church President in an editorial about the Kirtland Safety Society. To avoid any further criticism in the Church's own publication, Joseph, himself, became editor of the new paper.[3] Announcing the editorial policy of the Journal, Joseph wrote:

> We will endeavor not to scandalize our own citizens, especially when there is no foundation in truth for so doing; we consider that when a man scandalizes his neighbor, it follows of course that he designs to cover his own iniquity: we consider him who puts his foot upon the neck of his benefactor, an object of pity rather than revenge, for in so doing he not only shows the contraction of his own mind but the wickedness of his heart also.[4]

Joseph was, no doubt, referring to Warren Cowdery's use of the Messenger and Advocate through editorial comment to undermine the leadership of Joseph Smith and promote the dissent and apostasy that existed in Kirtland in 1837.

The first issue was published in October, 1837. It was the same size as the Messenger and Advocate, the "printed matter on each page (two columns) measuring 8¼ by 4¼ inches."[5] It was printed on "a superroyal sheet, and folded in form for binding, . . ."[6] It was published monthly by Thomas B. Marsh. Joseph Smith was listed in the Journal as the editor and he did write editorials for the paper, but it was Don Carlos Smith, Joseph's younger brother, who took charge of the printing office and did much of the editorial work.[7] All business concerning the Journal and all letters to be published were directed to Don C. Smith.[8] Like the previous Church monthlies, subscription cost was one dollar per year, with anyone sending in the money for ten subscribers receiving his own Journal free for the year. Because of the economic problems of the time, the one dollar subscription fee was to be sent in advance.[9]

The bulk of the first issue was devoted to correspondence. It contained a letter from Wilford Woodruff and Johnathan H. Hale, who were serving as missionaries in the Fox Islands. They reported:

> Although we have not baptized but a few on these Islands, yet there is hundreds believing and many are almost ready to enter into the kingdom, the calls are numerous from the neighboring Islands, and also from the main land, for us to come and preach to them, . . ."[10]

Another missionary letter published in the first issue was from Heber C. Kimball. The letter was to Kimball's wife and not meant for publication, but the editor took the liberty of printing it. Other correspondence included letters from Sidney Rigdon, Parley P. Pratt, and a series of letters debating religion between Mormon, Stephen Burnett, and Campbellite minister, William Haydon. The little

remaining space contained minutes of two conferences, wedding announcements, and an obituary.[11]

In that first number of the Journal, Joseph Smith wrote:

> We are in hopes that our patrons from seeing the Journal, close at the heels of the Messenger and Advocate, will take courage and forward us the "ready", for they may be assured that if there is no lack on their part, that the Journal shall at all times be forth coming in its season without delay, and by so doing our readers can get the news before it gets cold.[12]

Joseph was initiated to the difficulties of publishing when the very next edition was delayed "which was occasioned by the pressure of times operating against us, so that paper was not to be obtained in season for its isue [sic], . . ."[13]

The second number of the Journal printed letters from Wilford Woodruff, Erastus Snow, Orson Hyde, and more of the debate between Stephen Burnett and William Haydon. Also included were proceedings of the brethren in Far West, Missouri, as reported by Thomas B. Marsh and a paraphrased version of Isaiah, chapter sixty, also written by Marsh.[14]

Only two numbers of the Elders' Journal were printed in Kirtland. Church dissenters were numerous there and became more and more menacing, forcing Church leaders to flee. Fearing for his life, Joseph Smith fled Kirtland in mid-January, 1838.[15] The printing office was seized "to satisfy an unjust judgment of the county court, . . ."[16] On January 15, 1838 the printing establishment was sold at auction into the hands of Church dissenters. In a letter to George A. Smith, Don Carlos Smith wrote:

> At one o'clock the night following (January 16) Cousin Mary waked me and said that Kirtland was in flames. It proved to be the printing office. The fire was in its height and in

> one hour it was consumed with all its contents. The Temple and other buildings were badly scorched.[17]

Joseph Smith believed that the printing office was destroyed by a group of dissenters led by Warren Parrish.[18] He reasoned that after they gained possession of the printing office they knew they could not hold it, so they destroyed it.[19] Warren Parrish reported that he thought Joseph had ordered the press destroyed to fulfill one of his own prophecies and to prevent dissenters from printing matter against him.[20] According to a Church member who lived in Kirtland, Benjamin F. Johnson, the printing office was set on fire by Mormon High Councilor Lyman R. Sherman.[21]

After their leaders left Kirtland, most of the saints made their way to the newly established headquarters of the Church, Far West, Missouri.[22] Over a year before Joseph and the saints left Kirtland, John Whitmer and W. W. Phelps had planned to publish their own paper in Far West.[23] Elisha Hurd Groves was sent to Kirtland to procure a press and type. He also visited the various branches between Far West and Kirtland to collect money for erecting a temple in Far West. Groves "arrived in Kirtland about February 1837 and obtained a printing press and some goods from the above place" and had them shipped to St. Louis. He returned to Missouri that spring and picked up the press and other goods in May.[24] In August, John Whitmer wrote to Oliver Cowdery to inform him that it would take some time to prepare, but if things went well they would be able to "issue a paper by the first of Jan. next [1838]."[25] Unable to meet their projected January starting date, they still had hopes of getting the paper underway. At the end of January, Oliver Cowdery wrote, "Judge Phelps

say[s] we shall have a printing press started before long."[26] The newspaper planned by Phelps and Whitmer was never printed. They were charged with transgression and were excommunicated from the Church in March, 1838. After their excommunication, they appear to have lost interest in their printing plans.[27]

Mormon leaders, eager to get a Church publication going again, bought the press and equipment from John Whitmer.[28] A conference was held in Far West on April 21, 1838, where it was resolved that the Elders' Journal should again be published monthly as it was commenced in Kirtland, with Thomas B. Marsh as publisher. It was also resolved that the leaders support Marsh as publisher of the Journal and use their influence to obtain subscriptions for the Far West monthly.[29] On April 30, the following prospectus was printed:

> It is, we presume, generally known, that this paper was commenced in Kirtland, Ohio, in October last; but by reason of the great persecution against the saints in that place, the paper had to be stopped; and through the craft of wicked men they got possession of the Printing office, and knowing they could not hold it, it was burned!!
>
> The paper is now about to be resuscitated in this place; to be conducted as set forth in the former prospectus. It will be issued in a few weeks, and sent to the former subscribers. We hope the Elders abroad, will not fail to use their influence to give as general a circulation as possible.
>
> The JOURNAL will be edited by Joseph Smith jr., and Published by Thomas B. Marsh, at Far West, Caldwell County, Missouri.[30]

Joseph Smith would do some of the editorial writing for the paper, but most of the responsibility for the publication appears to have been turned over to Thomas B. Marsh, Sidney Rigdon, and Andrew Ripley.[31] In July, 1838, the third number of the Elders' Journal was published.

In that first issue from Far West, Joseph Smith wrote:

> Notwithstanding all efforts of the enemies to the truth; both from without and within, to the contrary, we are enabled to present this Journal, to the patrons, with the prospect of being able to continue it in time to come, without interruption.

He continued, saying that it was somewhat unexpected to be able to begin printing the Journal again so soon,

> but the general interest felt in it by the Saints in general, soon, in a degree, repaired the loss which was suffered in the burning of the press in Kirtland; and another establishment, by the exertions of the Saints in Far West, has been obtained, sufficiently large, to print the Journal; and soon will be greatly enlarged, so as to do all the printing necessary for the whole church.[32]

Following the pattern set in the previous two numbers, the third issue of the Journal contained correspondence from the missionaries to the newspaper. Thomas B. Marsh was in charge of this aspect of the paper and all letters to the Journal were directed to him.[33] This particular issue included a letter from Wilford Woodruff, James Townshend, and Joseph Ball, missionaries in the Fox Islands, and a letter in reply from Thomas B. Marsh. Also printed in the July issue were two articles by A. Ripley and a gospel discourse by Church Apostle, David W. Patten. One of Ripley's articles was a brief description of Caldwell County and Far West; the other, a list of encouraging hints for the missionaries.[34] Minutes of meetings and conferences held in Far West were printed in Journal number three. One of the results of these meetings was the excommunication of W. W. Phelps and John Whitmer, announced in the paper.[35] The July edition only carried one obituary, that of James G. Marsh, the teenage son of Thomas B. Marsh.[36]

In Kirtland, the second number of the Journal had listed twenty questions most often asked about the Church, its doctrines, and its founder, Joseph Smith. Journal number three, from Far West, gave the answers to these questions. Some of the more interesting questions and answers, given by Joseph Smith, follow:

> Question 1st. Do you believe the bible?
> Answer. If we do, we are the only people under heaven that does. For there are none of the religious sects of the day that do.
> Question 3rd. Will every body be damned but Mormons?
> Answer. Yes, and a great portion of them unless they repent and work righteousness.
> Question 7th. Do the Mormons believe in having more wives than one?
> Answer. No, not at the same time. But they believe, that if their companion dies, they have the right to marry again. But we do disapprove of the custom which has gained in the world, and has been practised among us, to our great mortification, of marrying in five or six weeks, or even in two or three months after the death of their companion.
> We believe that due respect ought to be had, to the memory of the dead, and the feelings of both friends and children.
> Question 11th. Did not Jo Smith steal his wife.
> Answer. Ask her; she was of age, she can answer for herself.
> Question 13th. Are the Mormons abolitionists.
> Answer. No, unless delivering the people from priestcraft, and the priests from the power of satan, should be considered such.—But we do not believe in setting the Negroes free.
> Question 15th. Do the Mormons baptize in the name of Jo Smith.
> Answer. No, but if they did, it would be as valid as the baptism administered by the sectarian priests.[37]

Sometime in 1835 rumors had begun to circulate Kirtland about an illicit affair between Joseph Smith and a young girl named Fannie Alger. Warren Parrish and Oliver Cowdery were probably the source of the scandal.

> And there was some trouble with Oliver Cowdery, and whisper said it was relating to a girl then living in his (the Prophet's) family; and I was afterwards told by Warren

> Parrish, that he himself and Oliver Cowdery did know that Joseph had Fannie Alger as wife, for they were spied upon and found together. . . .[38]

Out of harmony with Joseph and the Church on more than one count, a series of charges were preferred against Cowdery on April 11, 1838. One of the nine charges was "for seeking to destroy the character of President Joseph Smith, Jun., by falsely insinuating that he was guilty of adultery."[39] Oliver Cowdery was excommunicated from the Church the next day on April 12.[40]

In an effort to squelch the gossip about Fannie Alger and salvage his reputation, Joseph had written to Thomas B. Marsh and George W. Harris and requested that they send testimony defending his character. They did as they were requested and also inserted the testimonies, along with one written by George M. Hinkle, in the July 1838 Journal issued in Far West. Not wanting to start any more rumors among those who were not already aware of the charges against the Prophet, the testimonies were somewhat vague.

> This may certify, that I heard Oliver Cowdery say, in my house, that Joseph Smith Jr. never confessed to him, that he was guilty of the crime alleged against him, and Joseph asked if he ever said to him, (Oliver) that he confessed to any one that he, (Joseph) was guilty of the above crime, and Oliver, after some hesitation, answered, no.
>
> GEORGE W. HARRIS[41]

In Hinkle's affidavit he stated,

> . . . I asked Oliver Cowdery, last fall, when Joseph Smith was in the Far West, if the report was true, for said I, if it is, as he is to be presented before the church, I wish to know of the truth of this matter before hand. And he gave me to understand either in plain words or implications, that it was false.[42]

July 4, 1838 was a day of celebration for the saints in Far West, with a parade and the laying of the cornerstones of the temple

they planned to build. This particular Independence Day held a double meaning for the Mormons; commemoration of their nation's independence and Mormon independence from all mobs and persecutions that had been inflicted upon them.[43] Sidney Rigdon delivered a rousing Fourth of July speech. Both Joseph and his brother, Hyrum Smith, had read the speech prior to the occasion, but had not realized what a negative impact Rigdon's oration would have on the non-Mormon community and the Church dissenters. The following is an excerpt from Rigdon's address:

> We take God and all the holy angels to witness, this day, that we warn all men, in the name of Jesus Christ to come on us no more for ever, for from this hour we will bear it no more; our rights shall no more be trampled on with impunity; the man, or the set of men who attempt it, do it at the expense of their lives. And that mob that comes on us to disturb us, it shall be between us and them a war of extermination; for we will follow them until the last drop of their blood is spilled; or else they will have to exterminate us, for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses and their own families, and one party or the other shall be utterly destroyed. . . . We this day, then, proclaim ourselves free with a purpose and determination that never can be broken. No, never! No, never! No, never![44]

The oration was given to the saints and a number of leading citizens of Missouri, who had been invited to the celebration. It probably would not have caused many problems, except that copies of the oration were issued in pamphlet form from the office of the Elders' Journal.[45] From the pamphlet, the full text of the speech was also published in a weekly newspaper, The Far West, printed in Liberty, Missouri, the Clay County seat.[46] Throughout Missouri, newspapers took note of Rigdon's speech and reacted with angry editorials. Some Missourians were enraged by the address, while others were anxious about Rigdon's remarks concerning a potential war. The relationship between Mormons and Missourians would deteriorate to the point where the governor of

Missouri would issue an order to "exterminate" the Mormons, ironically using Rigdon's own words.[47]

In the months that followed the Independence Day oration, there would be attacks on Mormon settlements, skirmishes between Missourians and Mormons, and persecutions that would culminate in the expulsion of the Mormons from Missouri. Before the serious hostilities broke out, the fourth issue of the Elders' Journal was published. Sidney Rigdon took the leading role in editing the fourth number of the Journal. Included in its contents were communications from missionaries, a brief description of the place called Adam-ondi-Ahman, the proceedings of the saints' Fourth of July celebration, and several poems. A revelation received by Joseph Smith on April 26, 1838 was also printed in the August edition. The revelation specified the official name of the Church to be the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.[48]

Several other articles appeared in the August issue, one written by Sidney Rigdon, the others unsigned, but probably also penned by Rigdon. Of particular interest was a lengthy article that has the ear-marks of being a Rigdon-written document. The article attacked Church dissenters, which it named specifically, and referred to them as drunks, blacklegs, simpletons, scoundrels, and the devil's whelps. Among the dissenters mentioned by name were Warren Parrish and Warren A. Cowdery, the former editor of the Messenger and Advocate.[49]

The number four issue of the Elders' Journal was the last number published. Hostilities towards the saints increased through the fall of 1838. Acting upon false reports received accusing a

Mormon army of destroying the home and farms of Missourians, Governor Lilburn W. Boggs ordered a state militia of two thousand to march to Far West to stop the supposed rebellion. Governor Boggs wrote, "The Mormons must be treated as enemies and must be exterminated or driven from the state, if necessary for the public good."[50]

On October 30, 1838, the militia was camped within a half-mile of Far West. The saints spent that night in preparation for the battle they believed would happen the following day.[51] Within the short span of the Church's existence, two printing offices had already been destroyed. To prevent this from happening a third time, "the press was taken down and the type hastily boxed and buried, in the night, and a haystack put over it."[52] Whether these precautionary measures were necessary or not, the important thing to the Mormon people was that the press was preserved.

There may have been another number of the Elders' Journal prepared for publication and in the printing stage when the Mormons buried the press. Mormon historian, B. H. Roberts writes:

> . . . this press and type were buried in the dooryard of a brother by the name of Dawson. The form for a number of the Elders' Journal was buried, with the ink on it, in the hurry to get it safely hidden from the enemy.[53]

With only four numbers published, the Elders' Journal came to an end. Unlike the Star and the Messenger and Advocate, the Elders' Journal was not meant to inform as much as it was an attempt to rekindle the faith of saints disquieted by the events that had taken place in Kirtland. The Journal was somewhat defensive, sometimes harsh. "We will endeavor not to scandalize our own citizens," wrote Joseph Smith, inferring that the previous editor had done just that.[54]

An apology written by Parley P. Pratt, one of the Church's Apostles, was printed in the Journal:

> Whereas a certain letter has been published . . . derogatory of the character of Presidents J. Smith Jr. and S. Rigdon . . . I take this opportunity to correct the public mind concerning the matter.
>
> . . . I did write a letter in great severity and harshness, censuring them both, . . . this letter was written under feelings of excitement, and during the most peculiar trials.
>
> . . . I have full confidence in the book of Mormon, the Revelations of God to Joseph Smith Jr., and I still esteem both him and President Rigdon, as men of the highest integrity, the most exalted principles of virtue and honor, . . .[55]

While much of the Journal was written to strengthen and pacify bad feelings, some of the articles were attacks on Church dissenters. The writings of Sidney Rigdon were especially biting, which showed the bitterness and hurt he felt as a result of the one-time friends, now enemies who had attacked Mormonism.[56]

The difficulties faced in publishing the Journal mirrored the difficulties faced by the Mormons at that time. The Church was trying to survive opposition from both without and within its own ranks. Joseph Smith and others were arrested and put in prison. The remainder of the Saints began to leave their homes because of the threat of further mob activity, and by April 20 most of the saints in Missouri had crossed the Mississippi and found refuge in Illinois.[57] This time, they managed to save the printing press and equipment. The press would remain buried until the spring of 1839, "when it was dug up and removed to Commerce, Hancock, Ill., afterwards to be used for the publication of the Times and Seasons.[58]

NOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

[1]MA 3 (September 1837):572.

[2]Ibid., pp. 572-573.

[3]Ibid., p. 574.

[4]Elders' Journal 1 (November 1837):27.

[5]Andrew Jenson, "Papers and Periodicals," Historical Record 8 (March 1889):844.

[6]MA 3 (September 1837):574.

[7]Jenson, "Papers and Periodicals," p. 844.

[8]Elders' Journal 1 (October 1837):16.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Ibid., p. 3

[11]Ibid., pp. 1-16.

[12]Ibid., p. 15.

[13]Elders' Journal 1 (November 1837):29.

[14]Ibid., pp. 17-32.

[15]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, pp. 354-355.

[16]HC 2:528.

[17]Don Carlos Smith to George A. Smith, 18 January 1838, as cited in "Journal History."

[18]HC 3:10-12.

[19]Elders' Journal 1 (July 1838):34.

[20]Brodie, No Man Knows My History, p. 207. Also see Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, p. 216.

[21]Benjamin F. Johnson, My Life's Review (Independence, Missouri: Zion's Printing and Publishing Co., 1947), p. 29.

[22]Davis Bitton, "The Waning of Mormon Kirtland," BYU Studies 12 (Summer 1972):455-464.

[23]Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, pp. 116-117.

[24]Elisha Hurd Groves, "An Account of the Life of Elisha Hurd Groves," Church Archives.

[25]John Whitmer to Oliver Cowdery, 20 August 1837, Brigham Young University Library, Manuscripts.

[26]Oliver Cowdery to Warren and Lyman Cowdery, 30 January 1838, Cowdery Letterbook.

[27]Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 117.

[28]"Far West Record," p. 136.

[29]Ibid.

[30]"Prospectus for the Elders' Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ, of Latter Day Saints," Brigham Young University, Special Collections.

[31]Elders' Journal 1 (July 1838).

[32]Ibid., p. 33.

[33]Ibid., p. 34.

[34]Ibid., pp. 33-48.

[35]Ibid., p. 46.

[36]Ibid., p. 48.

[37]Ibid., pp. 42-44.

[38]An unpublished letter from Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs as cited in Brodie, No Man Knows My History, p. 458.

[39]Roberts, A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1:431-432.

[40]Ibid., p. 434.

[41]Elders' Journal 1 (July 1838):45.

[42]Ibid. Fannie Alger was listed as one of Joseph Smith's first plural wives by Church Historian, Andrew Jenson. See Jenson, Historical Record 6 (May 1887):233. Also see Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, pp. 188-189, 341.

[43]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, p. 374.

[44]Peter Crawley, "Two Rare Missouri Documents," BYU Studies 14 (Summer 1974):518-527.

[45]"Journal History," 4 July 1838; also see Crawley, "Two Rare Missouri Documents," pp. 518-527.

[46]The Return 1 (November 1889):170.

[47]Hill, Joseph Smith: The First Mormon, p. 228.

[48]Elders' Journal 1 (August 1838):52-53; also see Doctrine and Covenants, section 115, verse 4.

[49]Elders' Journal 1 (August 1838):55-60. Fawn Brodie wrote "Rigdon published later a savagely obscene attack upon these men,

[50]HC 3:175.

[51]Barrett, Joseph Smith and the Restoration, p. 402.

[52]The Return 1 (November 1889):44.

[53]B. H. Roberts, The Rise and Fall of Nauvoo (Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, Publishers, 1900), p. 48. If another issue of the Journal was ready for publication part of the content may have been an abridged account of the missionary labors of Heber C. Kimball and Orson Hyde in Great Britain. See Elders' Journal 1 (August 1838):55.

[54]Elders' Journal 1 (November 1837):27.

[55]Elders' Journal 1 (August 1838):50-51.

[56]The harshest rebuke written by Rigdon is found in the final issue of the Journal. Of John F. Boynton, Rigdon wrote that he was "notorious for nothing, but ignorance; ill breeding and impudence." Rigdon wrote of Warren A. Cowdery:

> "This poor pitiful beggar, came to Kirtland a few years since with a large family, nearly naked and destitute . . . . He was taken in by us in this pitiful condition, and we put him into the printing office, and gave him enormous wages, not because he could earn it, or because we needed his service, but merely out of pity. We knew the man's incompetency all the time, and his ignorance, and inability to fill any place in the literary world . . . " Elders' Journal 1 (August 1838):55-60.

[57]Allen and Leonard, The Story of the Latter-day Saints, p. 129.

[58]Jenson, "Papers and Periodicals," p. 844.

CHAPTER V

THE UPPER MISSOURI ADVERTISER

And THE NORTHERN TIMES

Two other newspaper were published by the Mormons between 1832 and 1838, entitled the Upper Missouri Advertiser and the Northern Times. These two papers were unique to the other periodicals printed by the Church because they were sectarian in content. The Upper Missouri Advertiser was published in connection with the Evening and Morning Star in Missouri, and the Northern Times was issued from the same office as the Messenger and Advocate in Kirtland, Ohio.

The prospectus of the Evening and Morning Star mentioned a supplement to be "published weekly, if required, containing the advertisements of Jackson county, &c."[1] Contrary to Loy Otis Banks's belief that only one supplement was ever printed, the supplement mentioned became the Upper Missouri Advertiser.[2] The first issue of the Star contained the notice that "Advertisements will be inserted to order, in a supplement, at the usual rates."[3] In issue number two, the same notice appeared with the word "supplement" replaced by "the Advertiser." That same issue announced,

> In connxeion [sic] with the star, we publish a weekly paper, entitled 'The Upper Missouri Advertiser,' It will contain sketches of the news of the day, politics, advertisements, and whatever tends to promote the interests of the Great West.[4]

The Upper Missouri Advertiser began about the same time as the Star, June of 1832. In Banks's thesis, he accused William W. Phelps,

editor of both the Star and Advertiser, of neglecting to represent the interests of the community. He stated that Phelps's neglect was a result of his zeal to support the missionary work of the Church. This might be seen as true if one examined only the Evening and Morning Star.[5] It was never meant to be a secular newspaper for the general population of Independence, Missouri. It was a religious periodical published mainly for Church members and potential Mormons who were investigating the new sect. The Upper Missouri Advertiser contained no Church news or theological articles. It ran advertisements for those desiring to sell services or products, and news items of interest to the general public. Phelps planned to make it a "weekly paper worthy of patronage, and a vehicle of the news of the day, . . ."[6]

Originally, the Advertiser was a single sheet printed only on one side. This may have changed later, as there were plans for expanding the paper, mentioned in the terms of the subscription: "The Advertiser will be published weekly at Independence, at the rate of seventy five cents a year, till the sheet is printed on both sides—then one dollar a year: in advance."[7]

Whether Phelps expanded news coverage and size of the paper or not is not known. Only one issue of the Advertiser, number three, is extant. This surviving sheet is dated July 11, 1832, and contains short articles on cholera, an Indian war, and Spain and Portugal. Most of the articles were taken from other newspapers. The Advertiser also gave notice of local legal decisions, names of people who had not picked up letters from the post office, and included a number of advertisements.[8] Other than this only existing Advertiser known and

one article printed in the Morning Courier and New-York Enquirer which was taken from Advertiser, almost nothing is known concerning its content.[9] It is also not known how well the paper was accepted by the locals of Jackson county, except to say that the weekly did exist from August 1832 to July 1833 when the printing office was destroyed by a mob. A letter written to Governor Dunklin mentions the July 20, 1833 "stoppage of the Evening and Morning Star, a monthly paper, and the Upper Missouri Advertiser, a weekly paper."[10] It is clear that the Advertiser began in conjunction with the Star and ended when Phelps's printing establishment was razed. It was not revived or reprinted with the Star in Kirtland.

The Northern Times was also a weekly secular newspaper, but unlike the Advertiser, it was designed to be a political periodical. The Literary Firm had planned to print a political weekly as early as 1833. In a letter to his friend, Horace Kingsbury, Oliver Cowdery wrote:

> I wish you to inform those of our Jackson friends, who wish for the information, that we shall print the Democrat in this place [Kirtland] as circumstances render it impossible to print it elsewhere.
>
> We shall draw a Prospectus soon, and if opportunity presents, send a copy to your place previous to publishing it, for the inspection and advice of our friends.[11]

Joseph Smith also mentioned the proposed Democrat in a letter to the brethren in Missouri, dated December 1833: "We expect shortly to publish a political paper, weekly, in favor of the present administration; . . . for thereby we can show the public the purity of our intention in supporting the government under which we live."[12]

For some reason the Democrat was never printed, but the idea of publishing a political newspaper was not abandoned. In February

1835 the first issue of the Northern Times appeared.[13] In his thesis on Mormon journalism, Loy Otis Banks states that the political influence of the Times, "both within and without the Church, cannot have been very great." He also reasoned that because of the financial burden of building a temple, "it seems doubtful that a very considerable number of the Saints in Kirtland could have supported a political weekly."[14] It is difficult to say how much political influence the Times did have, but it did not go unnoticed by other area newspapers. The Painesville Telegraph reported:

> The Mormonites in this country, as if weary of the dull monotony of dreams and devotion, of visions and vexation--of profitless prophecies, and talking in tongues,--have concluded to turn their attention to political matters. A paper entitled the Northern Times has made its appearance from their press in Kirtland, bearing the name of O. Cowdery, one of their leaders and preachers, as Editor . . . . As the editor professes to have communications with the spirits of the invisible world, and certifies that he has seen an Angel, and "hefted" the golden plates of the Prophet, he will be a political anomaly, if not a dangerous opponent.[15]

It is not known what the circulation of the Times was. Banks may be correct in his assumption that the Kirtland Mormons could not afford the two dollar subscription fee, but interest in politics did exist. During the planning stages for the Democrat, Cowdery had surveyed the town and wrote, "I have learned the feelings of a large number of the inhabitants of this town, and find them far better inclined than I had anticipated."[16] It is also possible that a large number of people subscribed without paying the subscription cost, even though Cowdery had tried to avoid this problem by charging a late fee for those who did not pay on time.[17]

An in-depth study of the Northern Times is impossible because, like the Advertiser, there are few existing copies. Only three

complete issues and fragments of several others are known to exist. From the surviving copies we know that the Times was printed by F. G. Williams and Company in Kirtland, and was originally edited by Oliver Cowdery. The paper was a partisan weekly favoring the Democratic party; its motto: "Where Intelligence Dwells, There is Freedom."[18]

The October 9, 1835 issue ran a continuation of a story entitled "Western Land Pirate." It was a story about a Mr. Hues and his interview with a John A. Murel, a villain Hues was determined to see come to justice. Murel told of his upbringing in Tennessee and how his mother had taught him to steal as soon as he could walk. Murel said, "By the time I was twenty, I began to acquire considerable character as a villain, . . ." He talked of inciting a slave riot, and recalled how he had stolen a slave, sold him, then stole him again and killed him so he would not get caught with the "goods." Hues secretly kept notes of Murel's confessions on small pieces of paper he hid in his cap. The story concludes, "In this cautious manner Hues succeeded in retaining a correct journal of all that occurred, while on the disagreeable and dangerous travels with John A. Murel; the great Western land pirate."[19] Whether the account was fact or fiction is not known, but it tried to point out some of the evils of the time.

Also contained in this particular issue were medical remedies, political news and advertisements for several candidates, foreign news, and an article about abolition:

> Several communications have been sent to the Northern Times, for insertion, in favor of anti-slavery--or the abolition of slavery. To prevent any misunderstanding on the subject, we positively say, that we shall have nothing to do with the matter--we are opposed to abolition, and whatever is calculated to disturb the peace and harmony of our

> Constitution and country. Abolition does hardly belong to law or religion, politics or gospel, according to our idea on the subject.[20]

The issue mentioned above and the other remaining copies and fragments show that, along with political and foreign news, the Times contained local news, advertisements, editorials, and even reported the weather: ". . . it rains every day to the mortification or 'mudification' of travelers . . ."[21]

Oliver Cowdery edited the paper until May, 1835, when Frederick G. Williams was appointed to edit the Times.[22] Cowdery had received criticism from contemporary newspapers while he was editor. A response was printed in the Times:

> Mr. Cowdery, the former editor of the Times, very politely informed the Whig and all others, who were disposed to reflect upon him in consequence of his religious principles, that he considered neither the Whig nor any others, who would stoop so far below the character of an American, worthy of his notice, . . .[23]

Even after Williams took over as editor, the publication was greatly influenced by Oliver Cowdery. In a letter written in October to John A. Bryan, a candidate for governor of Ohio, Cowdery wrote, "You have probably seen the Northern Times--that paper is under my care and direction."[24] W. W. Phelps also contributed to the Times.[25] Little else is known about the Northern Times. It is not known how long the paper was published, but it is believed to have continued for more than a year.[26]

NOTES FOR CHAPTER V

[1]Times and Seasons 5 (15 August 1844):611.

[2]Loy Otis Banks, "Latter-day Saint Journalism" (MA thesis University of Missouri, 1948), p. 13.

[3]EMS 1 (June 1832):n.p.

[4]EMS 1 (July 1832):n.p.

[5]Banks, "Latter-day Saint Journalism," p. 1.

[6]EMS 1 (October 1832):n.p.

[7]Upper Missouri Advertiser 1 (11 July 1832), only issue extant, copy in Brigham Young University Library.

[8]Ibid.

[9]Crawley, "A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," p. 478.

[10]HC 1:412.

[11]Oliver Cowdery to Horace Kingsbury, 29 November 1833, Cowdery Letterbook.

[12]Joseph Smith to "Dear Brethren," 5 December 1835, Joseph Smith Kirtland Letterbook, Church Archives, Salt Lake City.

[13]Max H. Parkin, "Mormon Political Involvement in Ohio," BYU Studies 9 (Summer 1969):489. There may have been several issues of the Northern Times published in the fall of 1834. The Chardon Spectator and Geauga Gazette referred to "two little black half sheets," circulated before the fall election, under the title, Northern Times. According to Peter Crawley, "Whether this refers to a Northern Times prospectus or an abortive attempt to launch the Times, or simply a Spectator error, is not known." Crawley, "A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," p. 496.

[14]Banks, "Latter-day Saint Journalism," pp. 77-78.

[15]Painesville Telegraph 6 (20 February 1835):n.p.

[16]Oliver Cowdery to Horace Kingsbury, 29 November 1833, Cowdery Letterbook.

[17]Northern Times (n.d.):n.p. This fragment states that the subscription rate would be $2 per year "payable within the first quarter; 2.25 within the year; or 2.50 if payment is delayed till the close of the year."

[18]Northern Times 1 (9 October 1835):n.p.

[19]Ibid.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid.

[22]Crawley, "A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," p. 497.

[23]Northern Times 1 (9 October 1835):n.p.

[24]Oliver Cowdery to John A. Bryan, 15 October 1835, Cowdery Letterbook.

[25]Diary of W. W. Phelps, as cited in Crawley, "A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," p. 497.

[26]Cook, The Revelations of the Prophet Joseph Smith, p. 115.

CONCLUSION

Within the turmoil of early Mormon history the Latter-day Saint press had been productive.[1] The Church's printing business did not escape the persecution of Mormonism nor the dissension among early members. It was usually a primary target of the Church's enemies. Two Mormon printing offices were destroyed; one in Missouri and the other in Ohio. A third press was buried to prevent its destruction. But in spite of often violent opposition, Mormon publishing survived. From June 1832 to August 1838, five different periodicals were issued, three monthlies and two weeklies published in three different locations.

Little is known about the weeklies. One was a conventional secular newspaper, and the other a political journal. Both were clearly subordinate to and supplemental to the church monthlies.

As stated in the introduction of this work, the several primary purposes of the LDS religious monthlies were typical of American religious periodicals generally: to inform and instruct Church members, promote faith and confidence in the religion and its leaders, and serve as a missionary tool. In addition, LDS monthlies of this period combatted anti-Mormon literature.

The monthlies were probably most successful as vehicles of information. The _Star_, alone, published twenty-three revelations, whole or in part, that would be included in the _Doctrine and Covenants_.[2] Along with the revelations, numerous theological articles

were printed in the monthlies. The most important result of the published doctrine was a standardization of beliefs among the early members of the Church.

It is difficult to ascertain what kind of effect the newspapers had on members as far as promoting their faith and confidence in the Church. A letter from two new converts reported, "it rejoices our hearts & feasts our souls, to hear through the medium of your Star, the success of our brethren . . ."[3] From what is known about the circulation of the Mormon newspapers, it can be assumed that they were popular among the saints. Also, the great efforts made by Church leaders to continue publication in the face of adversity demonstrates that they believed the papers to be worthwhile. The Journal was especially used as a confidence builder. It expounded the virtues of Mormon leaders and pointed out the wickedness and folly of Church dissenters. Parley P. Pratt called the Journal a "valuable paper."[4]

As a combat to anti-Mormonism and falsehoods written about the Church, the periodicals appear to have had little positive effect. Contemporary newspapers seldom mentioned the Mormon press. Several articles announced the first Mormon paper, the Star, after receiving its prospectus and learning that W. W. Phelps was to be the editor. Phelps was known to other early journalists through his work as editor of an anti-Mason newspaper.[5] After the destruction of the first Latter-day Saint press and the purchase of a new press in Ohio, the Michigan Sentinel and Ohio Atlas reported, "The Evening and the Morning Star devoted to the dissemination of the principles of the Mormon religion, has been resuscitated at Kirtland . . ." The article

also noted that the paper "is conducted, we should think, with considerable ability."[6] Though the Missouri persecutions of the saints were detailed in the Mormon papers, few contemporary periodicals used the Church newspapers as a source of information. One Canadian newspaper picked up a story from the Star about the hostilities in Jackson County, but carried an editorial about the situation that did not please Star editor, Oliver Cowdery.[7]

The Mormon paper that was given the most attention by other newspapers was the Northern Times. A partisan political paper, the Northern Times generated more public interest than would a religious monthly. It was particularly noticed by papers of opposing political views. The Chardon Spectator and Geauga Gazette facetiously recommended the Northern Times to "people fond of light reading."[8] A month later, the Spectator printed:

> The Northern Times appears to observe neither times nor seasons. After the lapse of four or five weeks, from the first and only regular number, an extra has made its appearance, making three extras to one regular, much like the extra allowances made to some of the mail contractors--being greater than the regular.[9]

A letter to the editor of the Painesville Telegraph said:

> But now they Mormons have entered pell mell into the arena of political controversies and strifes, started a Jackson paper without the least prospect of support or patronage, and are prating about Church and State, Bank, Democracy, Federalism, &c., &c.[10]

Cowdery's deep involvement in the Church hurt his credibility as a political editor, as it did anyone involved in Mormonism.

> We learn by the Warren News Letter that O. Cowdery has withdrawn from the editorial department of the Northern Times, a Mormon Van Buren paper published in this county, and that F. G. Williams will henceforth act as editor of this invaluable journal. It is thought that the case of Democracy will not be endangered by this change, as the new encumbent

> [sic], if he has not, like his predecessor, seen an angel, and "hefted" the golden plates, is at least a faithful follower of the Prophet, by whose inspiration the paper will doubtless still be guided in its political cause.[11]

The Mormon editors were aware of articles being published about the Church and often included them in their newspaper. Those articles were usually followed by critical comments by Mormon editors.[12] One article appeared in the Rochester Republican and New-York Mecury which accused some Latter-day Saint preachers of "staging" an appearance of an angel. It went on to say that some unbelievers caught the ghost which turned out to be "the Mormon Prophet himself." Oliver Cowdery, editor of the Messenger and Advocate, printed the article in its entirety and then refuted the story. He also stated, "I do not suppose that the Messenger and Advocate will fall into the hands of but a few, if any, of those who severally read this ridiculous falsehood . . ."[13] A few articles that had been favorable to Mormonism were noticed and also reprinted in the Church papers. But the favorable attitude came from contact with a Mormon preacher, not by anything written in a Church periodical.[14]

The newspapers were effective missionary tools. Church members were informed that the Journal was "the vehicle through which you have the privilege of sending your testimony where you cannot go yourself."[15] Missionary Seymour Brunson wrote from Ohio, "The Evening and the Morning Star is doing much good here."[16] Messenger and Advocate editor, John Whitmer, wrote:

> . . . this periodical is opening and preparing many places, for such as are travelling to proclaim the gospel of our blessed Redeemer; whereas, if it had not been for this means, would have been closed and impenetrable.[17]

The value of the periodicals for missionary work was limited. As the missionary system of the Church expanded, there was a greater need for published materials and better information for the prospective convert than the newspapers could provide. Missionaries in their respective areas began to write and have published their own doctrinal pamphlets and books.[18]

Church leaders saw the value of having their own publication and were cognizant of the power of the press, though they surely must have recognized that some of their difficulties may have been caused because of their newspapers. Phelps's Star article about slavery was not the only cause of the Missouri persecutions, but it was the thing that finally triggered the Missourians to mob action.

Having survived difficult times, Church periodicals became a firmly imbedded aspect of Mormonism. These early publications were the forerunners of the over one hundred Mormon periodicals that were to follow over the next one hundred and forty years.[19]

NOTES FOR THE CONCLUSION

[1]For a complete bibliography of known publications of the Mormon Church from 1830 to 1839 see Crawley, "A Bibliography of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints in New York, Ohio, and Missouri," pp. 465-537.

[2]Woodford, "The Historical Development of the Doctrine and Covenants," p. 19.

[3]EMS 1 (May 1833):n.p.

[4]Elders' Journal 1 (October 1837):9.

[5]Rochester Republican 16 (24 April 1832):n.p.; Cleaveland Herald (17 April 1832):n.p., as found in Dale Lowell Morgan, "The Mormons and the Far West, Transcripts From American Newspapers." Microfilm copy at Brigham Young University. Cited hereafter as Morgan Index.

[6]Michigan Sentinel 2 (15 March 1834):n.p., taken from Ohio Atlas. Found in Morgan Index.

[7]EMS 2 (August 1834):182.

[8]Chardon Spectator and Geauga Gazette 4 (14 March 1835):n.p., as found in Morgan Index.

[9]Ibid., (14 April 1836):n.p.

[10]Painesville Telegraph 13 (17 April 1835):n.p., as found in Morgan Index.

[11]Ibid., (12 June 1835):n.p.

[12]Ibid.; MA 1 (July 1835):148-149.

[13]MA 1 (July 1835):148-149.

[14]MA 1 (February 1835):77.

[15]Elders' Journal 1 (August 1838):55.

[16]EMS 2 (June 1833):100.

[17]MA 2 (March 1836):238.

[18]For an extensive study of early Mormon missionary pamphlets see David J. Whittaker, "Early Mormon Pamphleteering" (Ph.D. dissertation, Brigham Young University, 1982).

[19]Joseph Fielding Smith, Essentials in Church History, 25th ed., enl. in 22nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1972), pp. 632-635.

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Prospectus for Elders' Journal

A HISTORY OF MORMON PERIODICALS

FROM 1830 TO 1838

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ABSTRACT

The "Mormon" Church has published over one hundred different periodicals since the purchase of its first printing press in 1831. The early Latter-day Saint newspapers set many precedents for the myriad of Mormon publications that would follow. This is a study of the periodicals of the Church from its origin in 1830 to the exile of its members from Missouri in 1839. It discusses the reasons and purposes behind early Mormon journalism and the effects of this printed material on Mormon history.

This work also gives a history of the five Church periodicals published during the era mentioned above, specifically, the Evening and Morning Star, the Messenger and Advocate, the Elders' Journal, the Upper Missouri Advertiser, and the Northern Times. One of the papers was a conventional secular weekly; another a political journal. The other three discussed were religious monthlies designed to instruct church members, promote faith, and to serve as a missionary tool. The religious monthlies were most successful as vehicles of information that helped standardize beliefs within early Mormonism.

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