

the ground, that the smoke there of might ascend to heaven as an offering for their sins."⁶³

Jedediah Grant followed Young at the pulpit and continued in the same tone. Grant advised abject sinners to consult with the president, ask for a committee to attend to their cases, and select a location where their blood might be shed. For such hardened wrong-doers, water would simply not do, as "their sins are too deep a dye."⁶⁴

The seemingly harsh and unqualified utterances made by Young and Grant on blood atonement have furnished fodder for generations of anti-Mormon writers bent on describing how freely blood flowed in lawless Utah.⁶⁵ To Mormon apologists, they have caused bewilderment and occasional concern. While references to blood atonement can be found both before and after the Reformation, those made in September 1856 are among the most pointed and oft-referred to.

Why did Brigham Young make such declarations? Did he believe in blood atonement? What did he have in mind when he urged Saints to practice it?⁶⁶ In all likelihood, not nearly so much as some have concluded. While Brigham probably entertained a theoretical notion of an ideal future theocratic society that would require individuals to atone for grievous sin, he clearly recognized that such a practice would be illegal according to existing statutes. Furthermore, it is doubtful that Young, characteristically patient and forgiving with regard to foibles of most church members, ever envisioned that such a penalty would be meted out to anyone excepting, perhaps, a hard-bitten apostate who had betrayed Mormonism's ideals.⁶⁷

Indeed, Brigham Young's motive in preaching blood atonement during the Reformation was not theological—it was practical. The Mormon prophet was not above using hyperbole or incendiary talk to bring about desired results. If biting invective would improve the people, Brigham would use it.⁶⁸ The blood atonement statements were likely designed to frighten church members into conforming with Latter-day Saint principles. To Saints with good intentions, they were calculated to cause alarm, introspection, and ultimately repentance. For those who refused to comply with Mormon standards, it was hoped such ominous threats would hasten their departure from the Territory.⁶⁹

In truth, issuing stern preachments from the pulpit became Brigham Young's major role in the early weeks of the reformation. To other church leaders was given the task of carrying out reform procedures in wards and branches. Jedediah Grant seemed to be everywhere. On occasion, he joined with Brigham in hurling thunderbolts from the pulpit. More often, he could be found preaching reform in Mormon settlements.

Jedediah's encounters with Latter-day Saint congregations were always stirring and eventful. Following the successful reform meetings in Kaysville, he moved to Farmington, where 445 people were rebaptized.⁷⁰ In late September and early October, Grant held conferences in Centerville, where, because some individuals needed "time to prepare their minds," rebaptism was postponed for three days.⁷¹ At Bountiful, rebaptism was postponed indefinitely as the people "were as cold as