

14. FALSE PROPHECY

At the time Joseph Smith established the Mormon Church, some people believed that the sun and the moon were habitable globes. The Protestant writer Adam Clarke made this observation:

On the nature of the sun there have been various conjectures . . . Dr. Herschel's discoveries by means of his immensely magnifying telescopes, have, by the general consent of philosophers, added a new **habitable world** to our system, which is the **sun**. . . .

There is scarcely any doubt now remaining in the philosophical world that the **moon is a habitable globe**. The most accurate observations that have been made with the most powerful telescopes have confirmed the opinion. (*Clarke's Commentary*, Vol. 1, page 36)

Josiah Priest believed that the moon has "rivers, creeks, lakes and small seas" and that it is "doubtless filled with animals,—consequently with rational beings in the form of men, as ourselves, for we can conceive of none other, as fitted to preside over its animals. The same we believe of all the stars of heaven" (*American Antiquities and Discoveries in the West*, Albany, N.Y., 1835, page 396).

Today, we look at these statements and smile, for we realize that Adam Clarke and Josiah Priest were influenced by the views of their time. The Mormon leaders were also influenced by these views. Brigham Young, the second President of the Church, stated:

Who can tell us of the **inhabitants** of this little planet that shines of an evening, called the **moon**? When we view its face we may see what is termed "the man in the moon," and what some philosophers declare are the shadows of mountains. But these sayings are very vague, and amount to nothing; and when you inquire about the **inhabitants** of that sphere you find that the most learned are as ignorant in regard to them as the most ignorant of their fellows. So it is in regard to the **inhabitants of the sun**. Do you think it is inhabited? I rather think it is. Do you think there is any life there? No question of it; it was not made in vain. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, page 271)

On May 14, 1876, Charles Walker recorded in his journal that Brigham Young taught that "the Sun was inhabited and God dwelled in the midst of Eternal

Burnings" ("Diary of Charles L. Walker," typed excerpts, page 30). The Mormon Prophet Joseph Smith went so far as to describe the inhabitants of the moon. In the journal of Oliver B. Huntington we find the following:

INHABITANTS OF THE MOON

The **inhabitants of the moon** are more of a uniform size than the inhabitants of the earth, being about 6 feet in height.

They dress very much like the quaker style and are quite general in style, or the fashion of dress.

They live to be very old; coming generally, near a thousand years.

This is the description of them as **given by Joseph the Seer**, and he could "See" whatever he asked the father in the name of Jesus to see. ("Journal of Oliver B. Huntington," Vol. 3, page 166 of typed copy at Utah State Historical Society)

It should be noted that there is a difference between Adam Clarke's suggestion that the moon is a habitable globe and Joseph Smith's description of the inhabitants. Adam Clarke claimed that he received his information from the science of his time. Joseph Smith, on the other hand, claimed that he received his information by revelation from God. We can overlook Adam Clarke's statement and enjoy the rest of his *Commentary*. In Clarke's time astronauts had not landed on the moon and telescopes were not as powerful as the ones we have today. Adam Clarke can be forgiven for making a mistake that any one of us could have made if placed in similar circumstances. Joseph Smith's statement, however, can not be as easily overlooked. His information was supposed to have come from God, and a revelation given in Joseph Smith's day should be as reliable today as it was then. As we examine the history of the Mormon Church we find many revelations given by the Mormon Church leaders that did not come to pass.

The Canadian Revelation

David Whitmer, one of the three witnesses to the Book of Mormon, tells of a false revelation that Joseph Smith gave when the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer:

In June 1829, the translation of the Book of Mormon was finished. God gave it to us as his Holy Word, and left us as men to work out our own salvation and set in order the Church of Christ according to the written word. He left us as men to receive of His Spirit as we walked worthy to receive it; and his Spirit guides men into all truth; but the spirit of man guides man into error. When God had given the Book of Mormon, and a few revelations in 1829 by the same means that the Book was translated, commanding us to rely upon the written word in establishing the church. He did His part; and left us to do our part and to be guided by the Holy Ghost as we walked worthy to receive. God works with men according to His divine wisdom and justice. He works with men only according to their faith and obedience. He has unchangeable spiritual laws which he cannot break; and he could not be so merciful as to give more of His Spirit to any man, than that man was worthy to receive by his faith and obedience.

In the beginning we walked humble and worthy to receive a great portion of the Spirit of God, . . . but we soon began to drift into errors. . . .

When the Book of Mormon was in the hands of the printer, more money was needed to finish the printing of it. We were waiting on Martin Harris who was doing his best to sell a part of his farm, in order to raise the necessary funds. After a time Hyrum Smith and others began to get impatient, thinking that Martin Harris was too slow and under transgression for not selling his land at once, even if at a great sacrifice. Brother Hyrum thought they should not wait any longer on Martin Harris, and that the money should be raised in some other way. Brother Hyrum was vexed with Brother Martin, and thought they should get the money by some means outside of him, and not let him have anything to do with the publication of the Book, or receiving any of the profits thereof . . . He was wrong in thus judging Bro. Martin, because he was doing all he could toward selling his land. Brother Hyrum said it had been suggested to him that some of the brethren might go to Toronto Canada, and sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon for considerable money: and he persuaded Joseph to inquire of the Lord about it. Joseph concluded to do so. He had not yet given up the stone. Joseph looked into the hat in which he placed the stone, and received a revelation that some of the brethren should go to Toronto, Canada, and that they would **sell the copy-right of the Book of Mormon**. Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery went to Toronto on this mission, but **they failed** entirely to sell the copy-right, returning without any money. Joseph was at my father's house when they returned. I was there also, and am an eye witness to these facts. Jacob Whitmer and John Whitmer were also present when Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery returned from Canada. Well, we were all in great trouble; and we asked Joseph how it was that he had received a revelation from the Lord, for some brethren to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right, and the brethren had utterly failed in their undertaking. Joseph did not know how it was, so he enquired of the Lord about it, and behold the following revelation came through the stone: "Some revelations are of God: some revelations are of man: and some revelations are of the devil." So we see that the revelation to go to Toronto and sell the copy-right was not of God, but was of the devil or the heart of man. (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, Richmond, Missouri, 1887, pages 30-31)

Joseph Fielding Smith, who recently became President of the Church, was apparently referring to this episode in a press conference in Salt Lake City:

President Smith said he believed, as did LDS Church founder Joseph Smith, that there are three kinds of revelations [*sic*]: "revelations from God, from man and from the devil." (*Salt Lake Tribune*, January 25, 1970)

The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts made these comments concerning this matter:

. . . our knowledge of the "Toronto Journey Incident" rests chiefly upon the testimony of David Whitmer, and the possibility is suggested of his misapprehending some detail of the matter, which might, if accurately known, put the incident in an entirely new light. That, however, is but conjecture; and while the possibility and even probability of misapprehension by Whitmer is great, still the incident must be considered as it is presented by him, since his testimony may not be set aside.

In that view of the case we have here an alleged revelation received by the Prophet, through the "Seer Stone," directing or allowing men to go on a mission to Canada, which fails of its purpose; namely, the sale of the copyright of the Book of Mormon in Canada. Then in explanation of the failure of that revelation, the Prophet's announcement that all revelations are not of God; some are of men and some even from evil sources. The question presented by this state of facts is: May this Toronto incident and the Prophet's explanation be accepted and faith still be maintained in him, as an inspired man, a Prophet of God? I answer unhesitatingly in the affirmative. The revelation respecting the Toronto journey was **not of God**, surely; else it would not have failed; but the Prophet, overwrought in his deep anxiety for the progress of the work, saw reflected in the "Seer Stone" **his own thought**, or that suggested to him by his brother Hyrum, rather than the thought of God. . . . in this instance of the Toronto journey, Joseph was evidently **not** directed by the inspiration of the Lord. (*A Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pages 164-165)

In his book, *Mormon Portraits*, Dr. Wyl prints a letter from "Mr. Traugher." We take the following statements from this letter:

Early in 1830 . . . Joe delivered a whooping big revelation directing Oliver Cowdery and Hiram Page to go over into Kingston, Canada, and sell a copyright under that Dominion, and thus get money to pay the printer and let Martin go—be independent of him. . . . the boys . . . came back nearly starved, completely wearied, with no money nor copyright sold either. In 1831, when Joe and Sidney were talking about having the revelations published, David Whitmer got up in the council and said all he could against the measure. But Joe raved and declared that the Revelations should be published. David said, "Brother Joseph, are you going to publish all of them?" Joe replied, "yes, all, in the order of their dates." Then David asked, "are you going to publish that revelation for Oliver and Hiram to go to Kingston and get out a copyright for the Book of Mormon?" Joe hung his head a while, then answered, "No." "Why not, Brother Joseph?" asked honest David. "Because," replied Joe, "It was not true." I have this from both Dr. W. E. McLellin (apostle and apostate) and David Whitmer, both of whom have read the revelation. (*Mormon Portraits*, 1886, page 311)

David Whitmer states that there were other revelations given by Joseph Smith which were not printed:

I will say here, that I could tell you **other false revelations** that came through Brother Joseph as mouthpiece, (not through the stone) but this will suffice. **Many of Brother Joseph's revelations were never printed. The revelation to go to Canada was written down on paper, but was never printed.** (*An Address to All Believers in Christ*, page 31)

Brigham Young confirmed the fact that some of Joseph Smith's revelations were not published:

Brother Hyde spoke of a revelation which he tried to find in the *Book of Doctrine and Covenants*. That revelation was reserved at the time the compilation for that book was made by Oliver Cowdery and others, in Kirtland. It was not wisdom to publish it to the world, and it remained in the private escritoire. Brother Joseph had that revelation concerning this nation at a time when the brethren were reflecting and reasoning with regard to African slavery on this continent, and the slavery of the children of men throughout the world. There are other revelations, besides this one, not yet published to the world. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 58)

Joseph Fielding Smith admits that some of the revelations are still withheld from the world:

Not all the revelations given to Joseph the Seer were placed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* in his day; . . . Some of them were for the Church and not for the world, and therefore are given only to the saints. (*Doctrines of Salvation*, Vol. 1, page 280)

It would certainly be interesting to see the revelations that are withheld from the "world," but, as we have already shown, this is next to impossible. The Mormon Church leaders complain that the Catholics withheld the scriptures from the common people, and yet they keep some of Joseph Smith's revelations hid from their own people.

The Lord's Coming

In 1835 Joseph Smith prophesied that the coming of the Lord was near and that 56 years should wind up the scene. In the *History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 182, we read:

President Smith then stated . . . it was the will of God that those who went to Zion, with a determination to lay down their lives, if necessary, should be ordained to the ministry, and go forth to prune the vineyard for the last time, or **the coming of the Lord**, which was nigh—even **fifty-six years should wind up the scene.**

Klaus J. Hansen gives this interesting information concerning this matter:

. . . in 1890 there was a widespread belief among church members that Joseph Smith's prediction of 1835, that fifty-six years would "wind up the scene," would be

fulfilled. But such enthusiasm was short-lived. In 1903, Patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson, . . . could not conceal his disappointment when he remarked that "we were over seventy years ago taught by our leaders to believe that the coming of Christ and the millennial reign was much nearer than we believe it to be now." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 76)

The Mormon writer Max H. Parkin gives this information:

During the visit of the missionaries in the Reserve, the *Ohio Star*, stated that while they were preaching in the Methodist Chapel in Painesville they "predicted the end of the world in 15 years." According to an article appearing in the *Painesville Telegraph*, when Martin Harris arrived in Kirtland March 12, 1831, he immediately proceeded to the bar-room of the hotel and enthusiastically prophesied to the patrons that "all who believed the new bible would see Christ within fifteen years, and all who did not would absolutely be destroyed and dam'd." . . . In June, 1831, Levi Hancock reported,

Joseph Smith began to speak, he said, "that the kingdom that Christ spoke of . . . would some day come. . . . Some of you shall live to see it come with great glory."

To what extent these early members taught and believed in the imminence of the end of the world may not clearly be established; however, there was at least one case where an afflicted Saint refused to call a physician because of his belief that he would never die. (*Conflict at Kirtland*, Salt Lake City, 1966, pages 53-55)

Under the date of January 23, 1833, Joseph Smith recorded the following in his *History of the Church*:

Among the number, my father presented himself, but before I washed his feet, I asked of him a father's blessing, which he granted by laying his hands upon my head, in the name of Jesus Christ, and declaring that I should continue in the Priest's office **until Christ comes.** (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 323)

John Whitmer states that at the time the High Priesthood was introduced into the Church the following occurred:

The Spirit of the Lord fell upon Joseph in an unusual manner, and he prophesied that John the Revelator was then among the Ten Tribes of Israel . . . After he had prophesied he laid his hands upon Lyman Wight and ordained him . . . And the Spirit fell upon Lyman, and he prophesied concerning the coming of Christ. He said that there were some in the congregation that **should live until the Savior should descend from heaven** with a shout, with all the holy angels with Him. (*John Whitmer's History*, chapter 5; also found in *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 176)

When the Twelve Apostles were first ordained in the Mormon Church some of them received the promise that they would live until Christ came. The following appeared in the blessing of Apostle Lyman E. Johnson:

The blessing of Lyman E. Johnson was, . . . that holy angels shall administer to him occasionally; . . . and that he shall live until the gathering is accomplished, . . . and he **shall see the Savior come** and stand upon the earth with power and great glory. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 188)

The following appeared in Heber C. Kimball's blessing:

Heber C. Kimball's blessing was . . . that many millions may be converted by his instrumentality; that angels may waft him from place to place, and that **he may stand unto the coming of our Lord**, . . . (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 189)

William Smith's blessing stated: "He shall be preserved and **remain on the earth, until Christ shall come** to take vengeance on the wicked" (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 191).

The Apostle Orson Hyde's blessing originally stated that "he **shall** stand on earth" till the coming of Christ; however, when this was reprinted in the *History of the Church* it was changed to "he **may** stand on earth." Below is a comparison between the way this was first published in the *Millennial Star*, and the way it was changed to read in the *History of the Church*.

MILLENNIAL STAR

. . . he **shall** stand on the earth and bring souls till Christ comes . . . he **shall** have power to smite the earth with pestilence; to divide waters, and lead through the Saints; he **shall** go from land to land, and from sea to sea; he **shall** be like one of the three Nephites. (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 15, page 206)

HISTORY OF THE CHURCH

. . . he **may** stand on the earth and bring souls till Christ comes . . . **may** he have power to smite the earth with pestilence; to divide waters and lead through the Saints; **may** he go from land to land and from sea to sea, and **may** he be like one of the three Nephites. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 189)

Of course, none of the Mormon Apostles lived to see the Lord come, and Joseph Smith's statement that "fifty-six years should wind up the scene" did not come to pass.

Writing in 1838, the Mormon Apostle Parley P. Pratt prophesied that in 50 years there would not be an unbelieving Gentile on this continent, and if the inhabitants were not greatly scourged within 5 or 10 years the Book of Mormon would be proven untrue. His statement appears as follows in the tract, *Mormonism Unveiled—Truth Vindicated*:

Now, Mr. Sunderland, you have something definite and tangible, the time, the manner, the means, the names, the dates; and I will state **as a prophesy**, that there **will not be an unbelieving Gentile** upon this continent **50 years hence**; and if they are not **greatly scourged**, and in a great measure **overthrown**, within **five or ten years** from this date, then the **Book of Mormon will have proved itself false**. (*Mormonism Unveiled—Truth Vindicated*, by Parley P. Pratt, page 15; copied from a

microfilm of the original tract at the Mormon Church Historian's Library)

When Parker Pratt Robinson reprinted the tract *Mormonism Unveiled* in the book, *Writings of Parley P. Pratt*, he was apparently embarrassed by Parley P. Pratt's unfulfilled prophecy. He reprinted the statement, "Now, Mr. Sunderland, you have something definite and tangible, the time, the manner, the means, the names, the dates," but instead of putting a semicolon after the word "dates" (as Parley P. Pratt did), he put a period and deleted the entire prophecy without any indication. (See the *Writings of Parley Parker Pratt*, 1952, page 205.)

A Temple in Zion

In a revelation given by Joseph Smith September 22 and 23, 1832, the following statements appear:

Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, established in the last days for the restoration of his people, as he has spoken by the mouth of his prophets, and for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem.

Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri, and dedicated by the hand of Joseph Smith, Jun., and others with whom the Lord was well pleased.

Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem shall be built by the gathering of the saints, beginning at this place, even the place of the temple, **which temple shall be reared in this generation**.

For verily **this generation shall not all pass away until an house shall be built unto the Lord**, and a cloud shall rest upon it, which cloud shall be even the glory of the Lord, which shall fill the house. . . .

Therefore, as I said concerning the sons of Moses—for the sons of Moses and also the sons of Aaron shall offer an acceptable offering and sacrifice in the house of the Lord, which house shall be built unto the Lord **in this generation**, upon the consecrated spot as I have appointed—(*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 84, verses 2-5 and 31)

Notice that this revelation, given in 1832, plainly states that a temple would be built in the western boundaries of the state of Missouri (that is, in Independence, Missouri) before all of those that were then living passed away. The leaders of the Mormon Church understood this revelation to mean exactly what it said. Although the Mormons were driven from Independence (Independence is in Jackson County, Missouri), they expected to return and fulfill the prophecy. The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt stated:

And when the Saints were driven out from Jackson County, almost all in the Church expected that they would speedily be restored; and a person was considered almost an apostate that would say, they would not come back in five years, or ten at the furthest; . . . The people think of almost everything else but the redemption of Zion, and speak to individuals about it, and they put it off a great distance ahead. But I do not feel to go to this extreme. I will give you my opinion;

so far as the revelations go, in speaking of this subject, I think that this event is nearer than this people are aware of. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 3, page 17)

On April 6, 1845, Brigham Young stated:

... as the Lord lives we will build up Jackson county in **this generation**, (cries of amen) ... and we will be far better off with regard to temporal things. ... (*Times and Seasons*, Vol. 6, page 956)

Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon Church,

... but if you cannot learn to keep the commandments of God in Great Salt Lake City, ... how do you expect to keep them in Jackson County?—for **we are as sure to go back there as we exist**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 134)

They are holy places, and they will be held sacred even as Jackson County; and there is not a man living there but at this day has the spirit of fear upon him and expects that he will have to march some day; and to this day, no man has ventured to cultivate or build upon the Temple Block. Joseph the Prophet dedicated that land, and they feel the effects of that dedication; and the blessings will remain there, and all hell cannot get it off; and I shall yet see the day that, **I will go back there, with Brother Brigham** and with thousands and millions of others, and we will go precisely according to the dedication of the Prophet of the living God. Talk to me about my having any dubiety on my mind about these things being fulfilled!—I am just as confident of it as I am that I am called to be a saviour of men, and no power can hinder it. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 6, page 190)

Brethren, **I shall go to Jackson County** with thousands of this people who will be faithful to their integrity; but we cannot go back until we have built some good houses. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 8, page 350)

Elias Smith stated that he expected “to live to be an old man, and to go back with the Saints to the land of Jackson County” (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 6, page 221). On March 10, 1861, the Mormon Apostle George A. Smith stated:

Who is there that is prepared for this move back to the centre stake of Zion, and where the architects amongst us that are qualified to erect this temple, and the city that will surround it? ... And let me remind you that it is predicted that **this generation shall not pass away till a temple shall be built**, and the glory of the Lord rest upon it, according to the promises. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, page 71)

George Q. Cannon made this statement on October 23, 1864:

The day is near when a Temple shall be reared in the Center Stake of Zion, and the Lord has said his glory shall rest on that House in this generation **in which the revelation was given**, which is upwards of thirty years ago. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, page 344)

In the 1870's the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt still maintained that the temple would be built in his generation. The following statements are taken from his discourses:

We have ... confidence in returning to Jackson County and the building of a great central city ... There are many of the old stock, who passed through all those tribulations I have named, still living, whose faith in returning to Jackson county, and the things that are coming, is as firm and fixed as the throne of the Almighty. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 13, page 138)

... God promised in the year 1832 that we should, before the generation **then living** had passed away, return and build up the City of Zion in Jackson County; that we should return and build up the temple of the Most High where we formerly laid the corner stone ...

We believe in these promises as much as we believe in any promise ever uttered by the mouth of Jehovah. The Latter-day Saints just as much expect to receive a fulfilment of that promise during the generation that was in existence in 1832 as they expect that the sun will rise and set tomorrow. Why? Because **God cannot lie**. He will fulfil all His promises. He has spoken, **it must come to pass**. This is our faith. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 13, page 362)

We just as much expect that a city will be built, called Zion, in the place and on the land which has been appointed by the Lord our God, and that a temple will be reared on the spot that has been selected, and the cornerstone of which has been laid, in the generation when this revelation was given; we just as much expect this as we expect the sun to rise in the morning and set in the evening; or as much as we expect to see the fulfilment of any of the purposes of the Lord our God, pertaining to the works of his hands. But says the objector, “thirty-nine years have passed away.” What of that? The generation has not passed away; all the people that were living thirty-nine years ago have not passed away; but **before they do pass away this will be fulfilled**. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 14, page 275)

God said, in the year 1832, before we were driven out of Jackson County, in a revelation which you will find here in this book, that before that generation should all pass away, a house of the Lord should be built in that county, ...

This was given forty-two years ago. The generation then living was not only to commence a house of God in Jackson County, Missouri, but was actually **to complete the same**, and when it is completed the glory of God should rest upon it.

Now, do you Latter-day Saints believe that? I do, and if you believe in these revelations you just as much expect the fulfilment of the revelation as of any one that God has ever given in these latter times, or in former ages ... we Latter-day Saints expect to return to Jackson County and to build a Temple there before the generation that was living forty-two years ago has all passed away. Well then, the time **must be pretty near**, when we shall begin the work. (*Ibid.*, Vol. 17, page 111)

By February 7, 1875, Orson Pratt was teaching that only a few of those who were driven from Jackson County would return to receive their inheritances:

We need not expect, from what God has revealed, that a very great number of those who were then in the Church and who were driven, will have the privilege of returning to that land. ... There will be some that will live to behold that day, and will return and receive their

inheritances, they and their children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren, according to the promise. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 17, pages 291-292)

Joseph Lee Robinson claimed that Jesus appeared to him and told him that the temple would be built in that generation:

On a Sunday evening, . . . A light, a beautiful light, was present before my eyes. . . . Then as quick as thought, a very large building was present before my eyes . . . Presently the voice of the Good Shepherd said to me: "This house you see is the temple of the Living God that shall be built in this generation by the hands of the Latter-day Saints, upon the consecrated spot in Jackson County, Missouri." . . . I know and have testified many times that I know that whatever might befall the Saints, the Temple of the living God will be built by the Saints—the Latter-day Saints—in this generation. ("Diary of Joseph Lee Robinson," as published in *Temples of the Most High*, pages 246-241)

Klaus J. Hansen shows that as late as 1900 Lorenzo Snow, the fifth President of the Church, was still hoping that the prophecy would be fulfilled:

In 1900, Woodruff's successor, Lorenzo Snow, affirmed at a special priesthood meeting in the Salt Lake Temple that "there are many here now under the sound of my, voice, probably a majority, who will live to go back to Jackson County and assist in building that temple." (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1966, page 74)

In 1923 Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl still held to the hope that the revelation would be fulfilled. In the book, *Temples of the Most High*, N. B. Lundwall quotes them as saying the following:

1 "This generation shall not pass away, etc. This is a promise that some living at the time when it was made, in 1832, would still be on earth in the flesh, when the house of the Lord would begin to lift its spires toward the sky on that consecrated ground. A generation does not pass away in one hundred years, and every generation has a few who live over a hundred years."—*Doctrine and Covenants Commentary*, 1923 edition, by Hyrum M. Smith and Janne M. Sjodahl. (Quoted in *Temples of the Most High*, page 234)

The 1890 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* carried a footnote which read: "a generation does not all pass away in one hundred years" (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Salt Lake City, 1890, Section 84, page 289). This footnote has been deleted in more recent editions.

As late as 1935 Joseph Fielding Smith, who recently became President of the Church, maintained that the revelation would be fulfilled:

I firmly believe that there will be some of that generation who were living when this revelation was given who shall be living when this temple is reared. And I do not believe that the Lord has bound himself to accomplish the matter within one hundred years from 1832, . . . I have full confidence in the word of the Lord and that it shall not fail. (*The Way To Perfection*, Salt Lake City, 1935, page 270)

In a more recent book, however, Joseph Fielding Smith stated: "It is also reasonable to believe that **no soul** living in 1832, is **still living** in mortality on the earth" (*Answers to Gospel Questions*, Vol. 4, page 112). It has now been almost 140 years since Joseph Smith gave the prophecy that the temple would be built in that generation. Since the Mormons have not even begun work on this temple, it appears that there is no way possible for Joseph Smith's prophecy to be fulfilled.

The Civil War

On December 25, 1832, Joseph Smith gave his famous revelation concerning the Civil War. It is printed as follows in Section 87 of the *Doctrine and Covenants*:

1. Verily, thus saith the Lord concerning the wars that will shortly come to pass, **beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina**, which will eventually terminate in the death and misery of many souls;

2. And the time will come that war will be poured out **upon all nations, beginning at this place.**

3. For behold, the Southern States shall be divided against the Northern States, and the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon **other nations**, in order to defend themselves against **other nations**; and then war shall be poured out upon **all nations.**

4. And it shall come to pass, after many days, slaves shall rise up against their masters, who shall be marshaled and disciplined for war.

5. And it shall come to pass also that the **remnants** who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly angry, and shall vex the **Gentiles with a sore vexation.**

6. And thus, with the sword and by bloodshed the inhabitants of the earth shall mourn; and with famine, and plague, and earthquake, and the thunder of heaven, and the fierce and vivid lightning also, shall the inhabitants of the earth be made to feel the wrath, and indignation, and chastening hand of an Almighty God, until the consumption decreed hath made a full end of all nations;

7. That the cry of the saints, and of the blood of the saints, shall cease to come up into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth, from the earth, to be avenged of their enemies.

8. Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly, saith the Lord. Amen. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 87)

The Mormon people believe that this revelation proves that Joseph Smith was a prophet. Larry Jonas, on the other hand, shows that Joseph Smith may have received the idea for this revelation from the views of his time:

On July 14, 1832, Congress passed a tariff act which South Carolina thought was so bad, she declared the tariff null and void. President Andrew Jackson alerted the nation's troops. At the time Smith made his prophecy, the nation expected a war between North and South to begin at the rebellion of South Carolina. This can be confirmed in a U.S. history book. Better yet, let me confirm it

from a Latter-day Saints Church publication, *Evening and Morning Star*, published monthly from Kirtland. Example 28 is page 122 of the issue which came out for January. The news of South Carolina's rebellion was known before January 1833. It was known before December 25, 1832 but it was not available in time for the December issue. It takes quite a while for news to be set up even today in our dailies. We would expect it to wait for a month to come out in a monthly. The example contains the information available to the church before the paper hit the street. The example and the prophecy are strangely similar. . . . Both consider the pending war a sign of the end—**which it was not**. In fact, the war expected in 1832 did not come to pass . . .

Far from being evidences of Smith's divine calling, the most famous prophecies which he made are evidences that he can copy views of his time. (*Mormon Claims Examined*, by Larry S. Jonas, page 52)

One interesting fact that would seem to support the argument that Joseph Smith borrowed from the "views of his time" is that there is another article printed in the January 1833 issue of the original paper, *The Evening and the Morning Star*, which has the title, "Rebellion in South Carolina." Interestingly enough, Joseph Smith's revelation has the words "beginning at the rebellion of South Carolina" in the first verse. In this article we read as follows:

In addition to the above tribulations, South Carolina has rebelled against the laws of the United States; held a state convention, and passed ordinances, the same as declaring herself an independent nation, . . .

And Gen. Jackson has ordered several companies of Artillery to Charleston, and issued a Proclamation, urging submission and declaring such moves as that of S. Carolina Treason. (*The Evening and the Morning Star*, Vol. 1, issue number 8)

Joseph Smith was probably familiar with the fact that South Carolina had rebelled at the time he gave the revelation. Just before the revelation concerning the Civil War is recorded in Joseph Smith's *History*, the following statement is attributed to him:

. . . the United States, amid all her pomp and greatness, was threatened with dissolution. The people of South Carolina, in convention assembled (in November), passed ordinances, declaring their state a free and independent nation; . . . (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 301)

Thus we see that the statement in Joseph Smith's revelation that the wars would begin at the rebellion of South Carolina was probably inspired by the fact that South Carolina had already rebelled before the revelation was given. This rebellion did not end in war, but the Civil War did start some years later over trouble in South Carolina.

The fact that Joseph Smith predicted a civil war is not too remarkable. Many people believed there would be civil war before it came to pass. The December 1840 issue of the *Millennial Star*, quoted an article from the *New York Herald*. In this article a civil war was predicted:

We begin to fear that this unhappy country is on the eve of a bloody **Civil War**, a final dismemberment of the Union . . . (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 1, page 216)

The Mormon writer John J. Stewart makes these interesting comments regarding Joseph Smith's revelation:

Many Mormons, better versed in prophecy than history, have supposed that Joseph made this prediction long before there was any thought of Civil War or any evidence to indicate that it would begin in South Carolina. . . . the Prophet himself prefaced the revelation by an account of the South Carolina affair, and the *Evening and Morning Star* treated it in some detail. (*Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 88)

Alice Smith McKay did a great deal of research with regard to Joseph Smith's revelation concerning the Civil War and came to the conclusion that it was only "the natural result of the stirring conditions of that particular period of history." In her thesis she made these interesting observations:

In 1831, a French Scholar and publicist, Alexis de Tocqueville, came to the United States. He became interested in the study of the machinery of the government and as a result wrote his famous treatise on "Democracy in America." He predicted the "inevitable separation" of the North and the South after his study of existing conditions. ("A Psychological Examination of a Few Prophecies of the Early Founders of Mormonism," unpublished Master's thesis, University of Utah, 1930, page 15)

In the *Annual Register of the History of Europe*, published in London, 1832 (p. 406) is the following prediction of the conditions of the United States:

Civil war and a dissolution of the union seems thus to be a preaching.

This statement was given at the same time that Joseph Smith gave his prophecy. The conditions at South Carolina pointed directly to war. Joseph Smith a man of foresight and wisdom, accurately interpreted the facts and information known. . . . The prediction was given at a period of actual preparation for war in South Carolina. (*Ibid.*, page 19)

In view of the historical evidence, as presented, the most reasonable conclusion is that this Civil War prediction was the natural result of the stirring conditions of that particular period of history. The data in this short discussion indicates very forcibly that this utterance was not "Beyond the power of human sagacity to discern or to calculate." (*Ibid.*, page 20A)

Joseph Smith's revelation concerning the Civil War was never published during his lifetime, and although it is included in the handwritten manuscript of the *History of the Church*, it was suppressed the first two times that Joseph Smith's *History* was printed (see *Times and Seasons*, Vol. 5, page 688; also *Millennial Star*, Vol. 14, pages 296 and 305). It is obvious that this was a deliberate falsification on the part of the Mormon historians, for over 300 words were deleted without any indication!

The Mormon historian B. H. Roberts informs us that the revelation was not printed until 1851 (seven

years after Joseph Smith's death): "In Vol. XIII of the *Millennial Star*, published in 1851, pp. 216 and 217, is an advertisement of a new church publication to be called the *Pearl of Great Price*. In the announced contents is named this revelation of December, 1832, with a statement that it had '**never before** appeared in print'" (*Comprehensive History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 294).

It is interesting to note that verse 3 of Joseph Smith's revelation concerning the Civil War did not come to pass. In verse 3 we read:

... the Southern States will call on other nations, even the nation of Great Britain, as it is called, and they shall also call upon other nations **in order to defend themselves against other nations**; and then **war shall be poured out upon all nations**.

War was certainly not poured out on all nations at that time as Joseph Smith predicted.

Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, in a sermon delivered April 14, 1861, predicted that the Civil War would destroy the nation:

In this country the North and the South will exert themselves against each other, and ere long the whole face of the United States will be in commotion, fighting one against another, and they will **destroy their nationality**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, page 55)

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, prophesied that the Civil War would continue until the land was emptied so that the Mormons could return to Missouri:

Do they know what they are doing? No; but they have begun to empty the earth, to cleanse the land, and prepare the way for the **return** of the Latter-day Saints to the centre Stake of Zion.

Have we inheritances there? When I left the State of Missouri, I had a deed for five pieces of as good land as any in the State, and I expect to go back to it. . . . Many of the Saints will return to Missouri, and there receive an inheritance . . . The earth will also be emptied upon natural principles: . . . Will it be over in six months or in three years? No; it will take years and years, and will never cease until the work is accomplished. There may be seasons that the fire will appear to be extinguished, and the first you know it will break out in another portion, and all is on fire again, and it will spread and continue **until the land is emptied**. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 9, pages 142-143)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt prophesied:

This great war is only a small degree of chastisement, just the beginning; . . . For instance the great, powerful and populous city of **New York**, that may be considered one of the greatest cities of the world, will **in a few years become a mass of ruins**. The people will wonder while gazing on the ruins that cost hundreds of millions to build, what has become of its inhabitants. Their houses will be there, but they will be left desolate. So saith the Lord God. That will be only a sample of numerous other towns and cities on the face of this continent. . . . But there are some in this congregation who will **live**, to behold the fulfillment of these other things, and will **visit the**

ruins of mighty towns and cities scattered over the face of this land destitute and desolate of inhabitants. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 12, page 344)

Since Orson Pratt delivered this discourse in 1868, it has been over a hundred years since these prophecies were given.

Wilford Woodruff, who later became President of the Church, made these statements:

I copied a revelation more than twenty-five years ago, in which it is stated that war should be in the south and in the north, and that nation after nation **would become embroiled in the tumult** and excitement, until **war should be poured out upon the whole earth**, and that this war would **commence at the rebellion of South Carolina**, and that times should be such that every man who did not flee to Zion would have to take up the sword against his neighbor or against his brother. . . . Who can stay this war that is devastating the whole nation both North and South? No human hand; . . . Will there ever be anymore peace among them? No, not until the earth is drenched with the blood of the inhabitants thereof. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, pages 13 and 15)

The following questions and answers appeared in the February 1854 issue of *The Seer*, edited by Orson Pratt:

Q. What will be the consequence if they do not embrace the Book of Mormon as a divine revelation?

A. They will be **destroyed from the land and sent down to hell**, like all other generations who have rejected a divine message.

Q. In what way will the Lord destroy this nation if they reject the Book of Mormon?

A. By a succession of the most terrible judgments. . . . The bonds of the Union which now hold together the States of this Republic, will be severed, and a fearful, desolating, civil war will rage between the South and the North . . . thus will the whole nation mourn and waste away and perish, unless they will hearken unto the great message which God has in mercy sent to them. There is no other alternative; they must **either embrace the Book of Mormon** as a divine revelation, or be **cut off by judgments** from the land, for it is the sure and certain decree of heaven. (*The Seer*, page 215)

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, prophesied that the Civil War could not free the slaves:

Ham will continue to be the servant of servants, as the Lord decreed, until the curse is removed. **Will the present struggle free the slave? No**; . . . Can you destroy the **decrees** of the Almighty? **You cannot**. Yet our Christian brethren think that they are going to overthrow the **sentence** of the Almighty upon the seed of Ham. **They cannot do that**. . . . (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 25, page 787; also published in *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 10, page 250)

Verse 5 of Joseph Smith's prophecy concerning the Civil War is rather unclear: "And it shall come to pass also that the remnants who are left of the land will marshal themselves, and shall become exceedingly

angry, and shall vex the Gentiles with a sore vexation.” The Apostle Orson Pratt explained that the “remnants” mentioned are the Indians:

To add to the sufferings and great calamities of the nation, they will be greatly distressed by the **Aborigines**, who “will marshal themselves and become exceeding angry” and vex them “with a sore vexation.” We are inclined to believe that this will not take place until millions of the nation have already perished in their own revolutionary battles. To what extent the **Indians** will have power over the nation is not stated in this revelation; . . . (*The Seer*, page 242)

The fact that Joseph Smith believed the wicked of his generation would be completely destroyed is obvious from a letter he wrote N. E. Seaton, on January 4, 1833. In this letter he stated:

And now I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of **bloodshed** as has not a parallel in the history of our nation; pestilence, hail, famine, and earthquake **will sweep the wicked of this generation from off the face of the land**, to open and prepare the way for the return of the lost tribes of Israel from the north country. . . . flee to Zion, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for **there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things**, which I have spoken, fulfilled. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pages 315-316)

On October 15, 1843, Joseph Smith stated:

I prophesy, in the name of the Lord God of Israel, anguish and wrath and tribulation and the withdrawing of the Spirit of God from the earth await this generation, until they are visited with utter desolation. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 58)

On December 16, 1843, Joseph Smith prophesied:

While discussing the petition to Congress, I prophesied, by virtue of the holy Priesthood vested in me, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that, if Congress will not hear our petition and grant us protection, **they shall be broken up as a government, and God shall damn them, and there shall nothing be left of them—not even a grease spot.** (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 22, page 455)

When this prophecy was reprinted in the *History of the Church* the Mormon Church historians tried to tame it down by putting a period after the word “government” and omitting the clause “and God shall damn them, and there shall nothing be left of them—not even a grease spot.” See the *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 116.

Brigham Young also predicted that the Government of the United States would be destroyed. On August 17, 1867, he stated:

I told General Kane that the Government of the United States would be **shivered to pieces**. Will this Government

ever be restored to its former peace and tranquility, and the institutions thereof ever be maintained and honored? If they are, it will be by this people. Everything they are doing at present in Congress is only calculated to widen the breach, and alienate and destroy every vestige of love and affection that may yet be existing; and this they will continue to do until they have severed the last tie and worked out the **entire destruction of the government.** (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 12, pages 119-120)

The Gathering

The same revelation that stated that the Mormons were to build a temple at Independence, Missouri, also stated that they were to gather to Independence and build the New Jerusalem. This was to be the land of Zion. In the revelation we read:

Yea, the word of the Lord concerning his church, . . . for the gathering of his saints to stand upon Mount Zion, which shall be the city of New Jerusalem.

Which city shall be built, beginning at the temple lot, which is appointed by the finger of the Lord, in the western boundaries of the State of Missouri. . . .

Verily this is the word of the Lord, that the city New Jerusalem, shall be built by the gathering of the Saints, beginning at this place, . . . (*Doctrine and Covenants*, Section 84, verses 2-4)

In 1833 the Mormons who were attempting to build up the city of Zion according to Joseph Smith’s revelation were driven out of Jackson County, Missouri, by the Gentiles. This was a great disappointment to Joseph Smith, and since his reputation as a prophet was at stake, he decided to try to reinstate the Mormons in Jackson County. Klaus J. Hansen states that he “resolved to meet force with force.” On December 16, 1833, Joseph Smith gave a revelation in which the Lord was supposed to have said the following:

And now, I will show unto you a parable, that you may know my will concerning the redemption of Zion.

A certain nobleman had a spot of land, very choice; . . .

And the enemy came by night, and broke down the hedge; and the servants of the nobleman arose and were affrighted, and fled; and the enemy destroyed their works, and broke down the olive-trees.

. . . .

And the lord of the vineyard said unto one of his servants: Go and gather together the residue of my servants, and take all the strength of mine house, which are my **warriors**, my young men, and they that are of middle age also among all my servants, who are the strength of mine house, save those only whom I have appointed to tarry;

And go ye straightway unto the land of my vineyard, and **redeem** my vineyard; for it is mine; I have bought it with money.

Therefore, get ye straightway unto my land; **break down the walls of mine enemies; throw down their tower, and scatter their watchmen.**

And inasmuch as they gather together against you, **avenge me of mine enemies**, that by and by I may come

with the residue of mine house and possess the land. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 101, verses 43, 44, 51, 55-58)

On February 24, 1834, Joseph Smith gave a revelation in which the following appears:

Behold, I say unto you, the redemption of Zion must needs come **by power**;

Therefore, I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel.

For ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched-out arm.

.....
Verily, verily I say unto you, that my servant Baurak Ale [Joseph Smith, Jun.] is the man to whom I likened the servant to whom the Lord of the vineyard spake in the parable which I have given unto you.

Therefore let my servant Baurak Ale [Joseph Smith, Jun.] say unto the strength of my house, my young men and the middle aged—Gather yourselves together unto the land of Zion,

And my presence shall be with you even in **avenging me of mine enemies**, unto the third and fourth generation of them that hate me.

.....
Therefore, if you cannot obtain five hundred, seek diligently that peradventure you may obtain three hundred.

And if ye cannot obtain three hundred, seek diligently that peradventure ye may obtain one hundred.

But verily I say unto you, a commandment I give unto you, that ye shall not go up unto the land of Zion until you have obtained a hundred of the strength of my house, to go up with you unto the land of Zion.

Therefore, as I said unto you, ask and ye shall receive; pray earnestly that peradventure my servant Baurak Ale [Joseph Smith, Jun.] may go with you, and preside in the midst of my people, and organize my kingdom upon the consecrated land, . . .

All victory and glory is brought to pass unto you through your diligence, faithfulness, and prayers of faith. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 103, verses 15-17, 21, 22, 26, 32-36)

Notice that Joseph Smith's name appears in brackets in the 1963 edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* quoted above. A footnote in the *History of the Church*, Vol. 1, page 255 explains:

It was not always desirable that the individuals whom the Lord addressed in revelations should at the time be known by the world, and hence in this and in some subsequent revelations the brethren were addressed by other than their own names. The temporary necessity having passed for keeping the names of the individuals addressed unknown, the real names were subsequently given in brackets.

Joseph Smith did raise an army as commanded, but he was unable to drive the enemy out of Jackson County. Reed Peck made this statement in a manuscript written in 1839:

In accordance with the interpretation of this parable Joseph Smith called for volunteers collected about 210 "Warriors" and marched to Clay County under arms, but the cholera on the second day after their arrival dispersed them and all hopes were destroyed of "redeem[ing] Zion" for the present, but to console the Mormons under this disappointment, Joseph Smith, before he returned from the campaign prophesied publicly to them, that "within three years they should march to Jackson County and there should not be a dog to open his mouth against them" . . . (*Reed Peck Manuscript*, page 3)

The Mormon writer Max Parkin stated:

The Camp, however, failed to accomplish its objective of re-instating the distressed Saints and it further aided in festering the sore of unpopular public opinion the Mormons already had in Ohio. (*Conflict at Kirtland*, page 129)

After the trouble in Missouri, the Mormons tried to build up Kirtland, Ohio. On April 6, 1837, Joseph Smith made this statement concerning Kirtland:

He [Joseph Smith] then closed at about 4 P. M. by uttering **a prophesy** saying this place must be built up, and would be built up, and that every brother that would take hold and help secure and discharge those contracts that had been made, should be rich. (*Messenger and Advocate*, April 1837, Vol. 3, page 488)

When this was reprinted in the *History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 479, the first twelve words were deleted. This was apparently done to cover up the fact that the Mormon people considered Joseph Smith's statement "a prophesy."

However this may be, Kirtland was not built by the Mormons as Joseph Smith predicted. Just nine months later this statement appears in Joseph Smith's *History*:

January, 1838.—A new year dawned upon the Church in Kirtland in all the bitterness of the spirit of apostate Mobocracy; . . . Elder Rigdon and myself were obliged to flee . . . On the evening of the 12th of January, about ten o'clock, we left Kirtland, on horseback, to escape mob violence, . . . (*History of the Church*, Vol. 3, page 1)

After the trouble in Kirtland, the Mormons tried to build up Far West, Missouri. On April 26, 1838, Joseph Smith gave a revelation which contains the following statements:

Let the city, Far West, be a holy and consecrated land unto me; and it shall be called most holy, for the ground upon which thou standest is holy.

Therefore, I command you to build a house unto me, for the gathering together of my saints, that they may worship me. . . .

And let the beginning be made on the fourth day of July next; and from that time forth let my people labor diligently to build a house unto my name;

And in one year from this day let them re-commence laying the foundation of my house.

Thus let them from that time forth labor diligently **until it shall be finished**, from the corner stone thereof **unto the top thereof**, until there shall **not anything remain that is not finished**. . . .

And again, verily I say unto you, it is my will that the city of Far West should be built up speedily by the gathering of my saints; . . . (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 115, verses 7, 8, 10, 11, 12 and 17)

Just a few months later the Mormons were driven from Far West, and although they managed to lay the corner stone for the temple, the building itself was never completed.

After this the Mormons tried to build up a city in Illinois which Joseph Smith called Nauvoo. On January 5, 1843, this statement appears in Joseph Smith's *History*:

Esquire Butterfield asked me "to prophesy how many inhabitants would come to Nauvoo." I said, I will not tell how many inhabitants will come to Nauvoo; . . . we have now about 12,000 inhabitants. I will prophesy that we will build up a great city; for we have the stakes and have only to fill up the interstices. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 5, page 232)

An important change has been made in Joseph Smith's *History* regarding the city of Nauvoo. In the *Millennial Star*, Vol. 23, page 280, Joseph Smith was reported as saying:

The Lord has an established law in relation to the matter: there must be a particular spot for the salvation of our dead. I verily believe **this** will be **the** place; . . .

In the *History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 319, this has been changed to read:

The Lord has an established law in relation to the matter: there must be a particular spot for the salvation of our dead. I verily believe **there** will be **a** place, . . .

The reason for this change is obvious; the Mormons were driven from Nauvoo in 1846, just two years after Joseph Smith had said "this will be the place." It is reported that when Brigham Young looked over the valley where Salt Lake City now stands, he said: "This is the place." A temple has been built at Salt Lake City, and work for the dead is performed in this temple.

In her thesis, Alice Smith McKay makes this interesting observation concerning Joseph Smith's idea about the location of "Zion":

Enlargement of the term *Zion* was due to the continued movement of the Saints from one locality to another. Prophecies show that in 1833 Zion meant Independence, Missouri. But after the Saints were driven from Independence, the meaning Zion broadened . . . ("A Psychological Examination of a Few Prophecies of the Early Founders of Mormonism," page 71)

It is interesting to compare a statement made by Joseph Smith on January 4, 1833, with one he made just

before his death in 1844. In the earlier statement Joseph Smith warned that the people of the United States must gather to Zion "in the state of Missouri" to escape from "the overflowing scourge":

And now I am prepared to say by the authority of Jesus Christ, that not many years shall pass away before the United States shall present such a scene of bloodshed as has not parallel in the history of our nation; . . . The people of the Lord, . . . have already commenced gathering together to **Zion**, which **is in the state of Missouri**; therefore I declare unto you the warning which the Lord has commanded to declare unto this generation, . . . **flee to Zion**, before the overflowing scourge overtake you, for there are those now living upon the earth whose eyes shall not be closed in death until they see all these things, which I have spoken, fulfilled. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pages 315-316)

On April 8, 1844, however, Joseph Smith declared that all of America is Zion:

You know there has been great discussion in relation to Zion—where it is, and where the gathering of the dispensation is, and which I am now going to tell you. . . . The **whole** of America is **Zion** itself from north to south, and is described by the Prophets, who declare that it is the Zion where the mountain of the Lord should be, and that it should be in the center of the land. . . .

I have received instructions from the Lord that from henceforth wherever the Elders of Israel shall build up churches and branches unto the Lord throughout the States, there shall be a stake of Zion. In the great cities, as Boston, New York, &c., there shall be stakes. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 6, page 318-319)

There are a number of statements which Joseph Smith made in the 1830's which show that he believed that the Mormon people would build Zion in Jackson County, Missouri. On December 5, 1833, Joseph Smith wrote a letter in which he stated:

I would inform you, that it is **not** the will of the Lord for you to sell your lands in Zion, if means can possibly be procured for your sustenance without. . . . the spot of ground upon which you are located, is the place appointed of the Lord for your inheritance, and it is right in the sight of God that you contend for it **to the last**.

You will recollect that the Lord has said, that Zion **should not be removed out of her place**; therefore the land should not be sold, but be held by the Saints, until the Lord in His wisdom shall open a way for your return and until that time, if you can purchase a tract of land in Clay county for present emergencies, it is right you should do so, if you can do it, and not sell your land in Jackson county. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pages 450-451)

Five days later Joseph Smith wrote a letter in which he stated:

. . . it is better in the eyes of God that you should die, than that you should give up the land of Zion, the inheritances which you have purchased with your moneys; . . .

Now hear the prayer of your unworthy brother . . . O My God! Thou who hast called and chosen a few, . . . and sent them to Msisouri [*sic*], a place which Thou didst call Zion, . . . and as Thou halt said that no other place should be appointed like unto this, therefore, I ask Thee in the name of Jesus Christ to return Thy people unto their houses and their inheritances, to enjoy the fruit of their labors; that all the waste places may be built up; that all the enemies of Thy people, who will not repent and turn unto Thee may be destroyed from off the face of the land; . . . (*History of the Church*, Vol. 1, pages 455-456)

On December 16, 1833, Joseph Smith gave a revelation which plainly stated that Zion could not be moved:

Zion shall not be moved out of her place, notwithstanding her children are scattered. . . .

And, behold, there is none other place appointed than that which I have appointed; neither shall there be any other place appointed than that which I have appointed, for the work of the gathering of my saints—

Until the day cometh when there is found no more room for them; and then I have other places which I will appoint unto them, and they shall be called stakes, for the curtains or the strength of Zion. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, 101:17, 20 and 21)

The reader will remember that although Joseph Smith gathered an army and marched toward Jackson County, he was not successful in his attempt to restore the Mormon people to their lands. In July, 1834, the Mormons wrote “An Appeal” in which they stated:

. . . the propositions of the Jackson county committee could not be accepted on our part, because they proposed to “buy or sell,” and to sell our land would amount to a **denial of our faith**, as that land is **the place** where the **Zion** of God shall stand, according to our faith and belief in the revelations of God, . . . (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, page 127)

The Mormon people felt so strongly with regard to this matter that it was considered a real offense for a person to sell the land he had acquired in Jackson County. On February 5, 1838, the Far West Presidency were tried for a number of offenses. In the minutes of the proceedings we find the following:

Elder Lyman Wight stated that he considered all other accusations of minor importance compared to Brothers Phelps and Whitmer **selling their lands in Jackson County**; that they had set an example which all the Saints were liable to follow. He said that it was a hellish principle on which they had acted, and that they had **flatly denied the faith in so doing**. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 3, page 4)

It is interesting to note that only about a year later (March 8, 1839) Joseph Smith himself “counseled to sell all the land in Jackson county”:

Alanson Ripley made a report of his journey to Liberty, and said that President Joseph Smith, Jun., counseled to **sell all the land in Jackson County**, and

all other lands in the state whatsoever. (*History of the Church*, Vol. 3, page 274)

The Mormon writer Leland Gentry makes this comment about Joseph Smith’s decision:

The decision to sell the lands in Jackson County was revolutionary indeed, but the exigency of the situation appears to have made it necessary. (*A History of the Latter-day Saints in Northern Missouri from 1836 to 1839*, Leland H. Gentry, BYU, 1965, pages 160-161)

As the Mormon leaders changed their ideas concerning Zion, they gradually gave up the idea of “the gathering.” This had been one of the most important teachings in Joseph Smith’s early theology. In a revelation given in 1830 we find the following:

Wherefore the decree hath gone forth from the Father that they shall be gathered in unto one place upon the face of this land, to prepare their hearts and be prepared in all things against the day when tribulation and desolation are sent forth upon the wicked. (*Doctrine and Covenants*, section 29, verse 8)

In the minutes of a conference held in Norton, Ohio, April 21, 1834, we find the following:

President Joseph Smith, Jun., . . . addressed the conference as follows:

“. . . The time is near when desolation is to cover the earth, and then God will have a place of deliverance in His remnant, and in Zion.” . . .

“Take away the Book of Mormon and the revelations, and where is our religion? We have none; for without Zion, and a place of deliverance, we must fall; . . . for God will gather out His Saints from the Gentiles, and then comes desolation and destruction, and none can escape except the pure in heart who are gathered.” . . .

President Joseph Smith, Jun., prophesied.

“If Zion is not delivered, the time is near when all of this Church, wherever they maybe found, will be pe[r]secuted and destroyed in like manner.” (*History of the Church*, Vol. 2, pages 52-53)

On February 1, 1846, this statement was printed in the Mormon publication, *Millennial Star*:

There is no characteristic by which the Saints are distinguished in the present days so peculiar as that of the gathering, and so long as we continue in connexion with the kingdom of God, the doctrine of the gathering will be of **vital importance**, indeed everything hinges upon this point, the Saints must be gathered out from Babylon, in order that they may become a kingdom and a people prepared for the Lord at his coming. (*Millennial Star*, Vol. 7, pages 47-48)

The Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt wrote:

Hence, there is connected with the great message of the Book of Mormon, “a voice from heaven,” commanding the Saints to come out from all nations as fast as they obey the gospel message; this they have been doing for

these many years, and this they will continue to do, until the work of gathering is fully accomplished. And after the saints, who are the salt of the earth, are gathered out, those who are left will quickly perish, as did Sodom and Gomorra. (*Orson Pratt's Works*, "Prophetic Evidence in Favour of the Book of Mormon," page 85)

Klaus J. Hansen given this interesting information:

Mormon missionaries, fanning out to the far corners of the earth, instructed their converts that gathering to Zion was one of the basic tests of orthodoxy. "None of the Saints," admonished Orson Pratt, "can be dilatory upon this subject, and still retain the spirit of God. To neglect or be indifferent about gathering, is just as displeasing in the sight of God as to neglect or be indifferent about baptism for the remission of sins." (*Quest for Empire*, page 47)

The idea of the gathering, which was so important to the early Mormon leaders, has now been abandoned. Richard L. Bushman, a Mormon author, made this statement in a letter published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Spring 1966, page 11: "But the doctrine of gathering has been **suspended** and our job now is to live in the world." The Mormon writer James L. Clayton stated: "In our early history, for example, the doctrine of the gathering was assumed to be a permanent part of the Gospel. Today just **the reverse** is taught, and a general gathering of the faithful would be disastrous" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Autumn 1968, page 73). The Mormon writer John J. Stewart gives this information:

This program of gathering continued to be a prominent one for the first hundred years of the Church. More recently, having firmly established itself in western America, the Church has undertaken to build up wards and stakes, temples and chapels throughout all parts of the world receptive to its message. Rather than emigrating to Zion, converts are now encouraged to remain in their native lands and help build up the Church there. (*Joseph Smith the Mormon Prophet*, Salt Lake City, 1966, page 60)

It would appear, then, that Joseph Smith's doctrine concerning the gathering has failed, and therefore the Church has abandoned this teaching. With this thought in mind it is interesting to read some comments concerning the gathering made by the Mormon Apostle Orson Pratt over a hundred years ago:

Joseph Smith . . . professes to have received, through revelation and commandment from God, a dispensation for the gathering of the Saints from all nations. Now the doctrine of the gathering of the Saints in the last days must either be false or true; if **false**, then J. Smith must be an **imposter**. It matters not how correct he may have been in all other points of his system, if this one point—the doctrine of the gathering be false, he must be a **deceiver**. Why? Because he professes to have received this doctrine by direct revelation and commandment. On the other hand, if the doctrine of the gathering of the Saints be a true doctrine and scriptural, this will be another presumptive evidence that Mr. Smith was sent of God. (*Orson Pratt's Works*, "Divine Authority," page 5)

Joseph's Boys

After Joseph Smith's death it was expected that his son would someday lead the Mormon Church, although he was too young at the time. John D. Lee stated:

Before proceeding further, we must learn who was to be the successor of the Prophet to lead the Church. It was then understood among the Saints that **young Joseph was to succeed his father**, and that right justly belonged to him. Joseph, the Prophet, had bestowed that right upon him by **ordination, but he was too young** at that time to fill the office and discharge its solemn duties. Some one must fill the place until he had grown to more mature age. . . . Time passed on until the whole twelve got in from their missions, and a conference was held, . . . Brigham Young arose and roared like a young lion, imitating the style and voice or Joseph, the Prophet. Many of the brethren declared that they saw the mantle of Joseph fall upon him. I myself, at the time, imagined that I saw and heard a strong resemblance to the Prophet in him, and felt that he was the man to lead us until Joseph's **legal successor** should grow up to manhood, when he should surrender the Presidency to the man who held the **birthright**. (*Confessions of John D. Lee*, photomechanical reprint of 1880 edition, page 155)

On June 29, 1856, Heber C. Kimball, a member of the First Presidency, made this statement concerning Joseph Smith's boys: "At present the Prophet Joseph's boys lay apparently in a state of slumber, everything seems to be perfectly calm with them, but by and bye God will wake them up, and **they will roar like the thunders of Mount Sinai**" (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, page 6).

Brigham Young, the second President of the Mormon Church, made this statement on June 3, 1860:

What of Joseph Smith's family? What of his boys? . . . They are in the hands of God, and when they make their appearance before this people, full of his power, there are none but what will say—"Amen! we are ready to receive you."

The brethren testify that brother Brigham is brother Joseph's legal successor. **You never heard me say so**. . . . I do not think anything about being Joseph's successor. That is nothing that concerns me. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 8, page 69)

As it ended up the Mormon people did not receive Joseph Smith's sons as Brigham Young prophesied. One of Joseph Smith's sons became the president of the Reorganized LDS Church—this is the church which actively fought against some of the doctrines of the Utah LDS Church.

Other Prophecies

On August 31, 1856, Brigham Young stated:

In the days of Joseph it was considered a great privilege to be permitted to speak to a member of Congress, but **twenty-six** years will **not** pass away before the Elders of this Church will be **as much** thought of as **the kings** on their thrones. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 4, page 40)

To those who have studied Mormon history, it is obvious that this prophecy did not come to pass. In 1882—twenty-six years after the prophecy was uttered—the Elders of the Mormon Church were held in derision because they taught polygamy.

On August 30, 1857, Heber C. Kimball boasted:

We are the people of Deseret. **She shall be Deseret; She shall be no more Utah:** we will have our own name. Do you hear it? (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 161)

In spite of Heber C. Kimball's boast the state still goes by the name of Utah.

On September 6, 1856, Heber C. Kimball made these statements:

The Church and kingdom to which we belong will become the kingdom of our God and his Christ, and brother **Brigham Young** will become **President of the United States.** (Voices responded, "Amen.")

And I tell you he will be something more; but we do not now want to give him the name: but he is called and ordained to a far greater station than that, and he is foreordained to take that station, and he has got it; and I

am Vice-President, and brother Wells is the **Secretary of the Interior**—yes, and of all the armies in the flesh.

You don't believe that; but I can tell you it is one of the smallest things that I can think of. You may think that I am joking; but I am perfectly willing that brother Long should write every word of it; for I can see it just as naturally as I see the earth and the productions thereof. (*Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 5, page 219)

Harold Schindler gives this interesting information concerning a prophecy uttered by Brigham Young:

The church leader then added a prophecy which brought hurrahs from his audience. "In twelve years," he said, "I will either be President of the United States or will dictate who shall be!" On this enthusiastic note the Mormon cavalcade began retracing its steps down the steep canyon road to the city. (*Orrin Porter Rockwell; Man of God, Son of Thunder*, University of Utah Press, 1966, page 250)

For other false prophecies and extravagant boasts see the *Journal of Discourses*, Vol. 3, pages 228, 253, 262; Vol. 5, pages 10, 93, 94, 164, 173, 274 and 275.
