



John Wentworth was editor of the *Chicago Democrat* and recipient of the famous Wentworth Letter from Joseph Smith. After graduating from Dartmouth College in 1836, young Wentworth went to Chicago, a city of less than five thousand people at the time. He bought the struggling *Chicago Democrat*, the city's first newspaper. He eventually became one of Illinois' leading citizens, being elected to the U.S. House of Representatives in 1843 at age twenty-eight. He served three terms in Congress. In 1857 he was elected mayor of Chicago.

was originally from New Hampshire and desired this information to help in the compilation of a history of his native state, which was being written by his friend George Barstow. Joseph complied with this request and sent Wentworth a multi-page document containing an account of many of the early events in the history of the Restoration, including the First Vision and the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. The document also contained thirteen statements outlining Latter-day Saint beliefs, which have come to be known as the Articles of Faith. Barstow did publish his history, but the Wentworth Letter was not included, nor was anything about the Mormons.

Wentworth did not publish this document in the *Chicago Democrat*, nor did it ever appear in any history of New Hampshire. But the Church's newspaper, *Times and Seasons*, published it in March 1842, and it has become one of the most important statements of inspiration, history, and doctrine for the Church. The Articles of Faith were written for non-Mormons and were never intended to be a complete summary of gospel principles and practices. They do, however, provide a clear statement about the unique beliefs of the Latter-day Saints. Each article is a positive statement of the differences between Mormonism and the sectarian beliefs of other denominations.

In 1851 the Articles of Faith were included in the first edition of the Pearl of Great Price published in the British Mission. After the Pearl of Great Price was revised in 1878 and canonized in 1880, the Articles of Faith became official doctrine of the Church.

BOOK OF ABRAHAM

In early 1842, about the same time Joseph Smith wrote his letter to John Wentworth, he was also busily engaged in "translating from the Records of Abraham."¹⁷ These records had been acquired in 1835 when the Church purchased several rolls of ancient Egyptian papyrus from Michael Chandler. Joseph and his scribes did some preliminary investigation of them, but labor on the Kirtland Temple and the subsequent apostasy and persecution precluded any opportunity for him to continue this work in Ohio or Missouri. Finally in the spring of 1842 he was able to dedicate himself to the task for several weeks with few interruptions.

Elder Wilford Woodruff, who learned in leadership councils of the Prophet's translation and some of its contents, recorded in his journal his feelings about the Prophet's work: "Truly the Lord has raised up Joseph the Seer . . . and is now clothing him with mighty power and wisdom and knowledge. . . . The Lord is blessing Joseph with power to reveal the mysteries of the kingdom of God; to translate through the Urim and Thummim ancient records and Hieroglyphics as old as Abraham or Adam, which causes our hearts to burn within us while we behold their glorious truths opened unto us."¹⁸

Extracts from the book of Abraham appeared first in the *Times and Seasons* and in the *Millennial Star* in the summer of 1842. Joseph Smith



In 1967 portions of the papyri that the Church had purchased in 1835 were discovered and presented to the Church. Among the most important and interesting was the original of what became Facsimile 1 in the Pearl of Great Price.

indicated that more would be forthcoming, but he was unable to continue the translation after 1842. What the Church received—five chapters of the book of Abraham in the Pearl of Great Price—is only a portion of the original record.

In 1967 eleven fragments of the Joseph Smith papyri were rediscovered by Doctor Aziz S. Atiya, in the New York Metropolitan Museum of Art. Studies of them have confirmed that they are mainly ancient Egyptian funerary texts of the sort commonly buried with royalty and nobility and designed to guide them through their eternal journeyings.¹⁹ This has renewed the question about the connection between the records and the book of Abraham. Joseph Smith did not explain the method of translating the book of Abraham, just as he did not explain fully how the Book of Mormon was translated. Nevertheless, like the Book of Mormon, the book of Abraham is its own evidence that it came about through the gift and power of God.²⁰

DISCOURSES OF JOSEPH SMITH

The Saints in Nauvoo frequently listened to the Prophet Joseph Smith preach, and many of them wrote of how moved they were by the experience. They thrilled to his words and were strengthened in their testimonies. Brigham Young said, “Such moments were more precious to me than all the wealth of the world. No matter how great my poverty—if I had to borrow meal to feed my wife and children, I never let an opportunity pass of learning what the Prophet had to impart.”²¹ Wandle Mace, a new convert, said