

CHAPTER THREE

THE ARTICLES OF FAITH: ANSWERING
DOCTRINAL QUESTIONS OF THE
“SECOND GREAT AWAKENING”

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Joseph Smith lived in the postcolonial period often called the “Second Great Awakening,” or the “Great Reformation of the Nineteenth Century,” which began at the end of the eighteenth century and continued into the first half of the nineteenth century.¹ The disestablishment of the alliance between church and state created an era characterized by widespread interest in religious regeneration and revival. Continuing disagreement about doctrine, practice, and church government by mainstream European Protestant churches caused further splintering of Protestantism in America into a variety of new sects.² As a young man, Joseph described vividly the local Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist “war of words and tumult of opinions” for converts in the vicinity of his home (Joseph Smith—History 1:8–9). With religious freedom relatively unknown elsewhere, the lack of state monies sponsoring a particular religion caused the various sects to compete for members, resulting in a distressing and confusing situation for undecided seekers like the Smith family.³

In a now-famous document written in March of 1842 at the particular request of John Wentworth, editor of the *Chicago Democrat*, Joseph Smith gave a brief overview of his own religious experiences, the contents of the Book of Mormon, and a general history of the Church to that point designed for individuals unfamiliar with the

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Restoration and the principles of the gospel.⁴ The document, called by Latter-day Saints the Wentworth Letter, concluded with a list of thirteen unnumbered statements clarifying central beliefs of the “faith of the Latter-day Saints,” later titled the “Articles of Faith.” The Articles of Faith, authored by Joseph Smith, reflect the new religious freedom of the Second Great Awakening and the questions that this freedom engendered, while at the same time setting forth and clarifying some of the doctrines of a unique tradition—neither Catholic nor Protestant but uniquely Latter-day Saint.

During the twenty-two years that had passed since Joseph’s First Vision and twelve years since the official organization of the Church, scores of revelations and Latter-day Saint newspapers and pamphlets had set forth important doctrines. Many of these seminal doctrines, however, were not included in these thirteen brief statements of belief. Instead, it appears that the Prophet Joseph responded primarily to many of the conflicting philosophies and traditions of the day espoused in Catholicism, Deism, Calvinism, Arminianism, Lutheranism, Universalism, and Restorationism, as well as to millennialist expectations, in the process of clearly setting forth some central Latter-day Saint beliefs.⁵ The proliferation of Protestant sects in America necessitated that each sect delineate differences from other sects by statements of belief, some requiring a profession of faith to their particular articles for membership and communion. The Articles of Faith briefly outline central beliefs, many long debated in Christianity, and provide a starting point for pronouncing Latter-day Saint doctrine.

Reverend George Moore, a Unitarian minister in Nauvoo, Illinois, commented that “Smith makes it a point not to agree with anyone in regard to his religious opinions.”⁶ For example, in the first ten articles of faith, Latter-day Saint beliefs contrast sharply with commonly held Christian doctrines like the nature of the Trinity, original sin, total depravity, limited atonement, predestination, free will, grace versus works, infant baptism and baptism by sprinkling, priesthood of all believers, *sola scriptura*, and postmillennialism. The Articles of Faith also answer questions regarding church organization, priesthood authority, and the presence or cessation of spiritual gifts, prophecy, seership, and revelation.

GODHEAD

Article 1: We believe in God, the Eternal Father, and in His Son, Jesus Christ, and in the Holy Ghost.

The first article is a general statement about the Godhead, confirming Latter-day Saint membership and fellowship with all Christianity through a profession of faith in Christ's divine Sonship. Latter-day Saints familiar with First Vision accounts and other revelations received by Joseph Smith (see D&C 20:17–29; 130:22) understand this article to define the Godhead as three separate beings; in the wording, however, Joseph did not emphasize this fact.

Nevertheless, in the context of the Wentworth document, which includes an account of the First Vision, it is very clear that the Prophet Joseph rejects the traditional Catholic and Protestant view of the Trinity expressed in the extrabiblical Nicene Creed⁷ and announces the Latter-day Saint belief in Heavenly Father and Jesus Christ as separate and distinct beings. In Christian theology, this belief is called “social trinitarianism.”⁸

ADAM'S TRANSGRESSION

Article 2: We believe that men will be punished for their own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.

Article 2 rejects the traditions of original sin, total depravity, and predestination.⁹ The imputation of the sin of Adam to his posterity is called original sin.¹⁰ This idea, generally credited to Augustine, teaches that all are born sinful and guilty; therefore, humankind is completely and helplessly affected by the Fall (total depravity), and, from this state, only a few (limited atonement) that God has elected (predestined) will be saved.

The Prophet Joseph taught instead that our first parents acted in harmony with God's divine plan¹¹ and that “Adam did not commit sin in eating the fruits for God had decreed that he should eat and fall, but [also] in compliance with the decree he should die” (see Moses 3:17).¹² Further, he explained “that it [Adam and Eve's transgression] is [all] washed away by the blood of Christ, and that it no longer exists.”¹³ Thus, “we are all born pure and undefiled.”¹⁴ The Prophet learned from his inspired translation of the Bible that Christ “atoned for original guilt”; therefore, children cannot be answerable for the sins of their parents because “they are whole from the

foundation of the world” (Moses 6:54). Nevertheless, the fallen nature of man and his world is acknowledged in this passage: “children are conceived in sin” (Moses 6:55), meaning that fallen and mortal human beings beget mortal children in a fallen world.

While clarifying the divinely ordained role of Adam and Eve and discarding the ideas of original sin and the total depravity of man, Joseph Smith was convinced of the “fallenness” of man and his need for redemption (see Moses 5:13). He admitted, “I have learned in my travels that man is treacherous and selfish, but few excepted.”¹⁵ Further, he lamented, “All are subjected to vanity while they travel through the crooked paths and difficulties which surround them. Where is the man that is free from vanity? None ever were perfect but Jesus.”¹⁶ The natural inclinations of humankind rule him, for “in this world, mankind are naturally selfish, ambitious and striving to excel one above another” (see D&C 121:35–39).¹⁷ Instead of original sin, the Prophet Joseph taught that while humans inherit a fallen nature, each individual is responsible for his or her own choices.¹⁸ Thus, Joseph placed the Latter-day Saints firmly in the camp of “free will.”¹⁹

GRACE AND WORKS

Article 3: We believe that through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved, by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel.

Joseph took issue with Martin Luther and many Protestants in explaining salvation by grace. The crucial issues regarding grace, debated for centuries, are its relationship to free will and works and the severity of man’s estrangement from God, with sects disagreeing on how to overcome this estrangement. Joseph’s statement of “obedience to the laws and ordinances of the gospel” perhaps might be called a kind of “works-righteousness.” The previous phrase, “through the Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved,” however, links his doctrine clearly to the grace of Christ, the unmerited help available to all humans. This article emphasizes that “all mankind may be saved”—a belief similar to that championed by Joseph’s Universalist-thinking²⁰ grandfather, Asael Smith, and a rejection of Calvin’s notions of the predestination of the elect and a limited atonement.²¹ By uniting the two phrases, (1) “through the

Atonement of Christ, all mankind may be saved” and (2) “by obedience to the laws and ordinances of the Gospel,” the grace of Christ and His work of salvation is preeminent. Humankind, however, must make and keep covenants with Christ in order to be saved.²² The prophet Lehi explained the principle of agency placed before humans, who were created to act rather than be acted upon, thereby possessing the power to choose liberty and eternal life or captivity and death as they are enticed by the opposing forces of God and Satan (see 2 Nephi 2:14, 16, 27).²³ The power, then, to act or initiate change in fallen man is a gift from God to all His children.

SALVATION

Article 4: We believe that the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel are: first, Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ; second, Repentance; third, Baptism by immersion for the remission of sins; fourth, Laying on of hands for the gift of the Holy Ghost.

In article 4, Joseph linked the laws and ordinances necessary for salvation found in the previous article to the first principles and ordinances of the gospel. These simple steps are in marked contrast to Calvinistic notions of many “stages of regeneration” and the idea that an individual must be regenerated (elected or predestined) by God before he or she could have faith in Jesus Christ. Thus, Christ chose or predestined those who would believe in Him.²⁴ Personally illustrating the confusing teachings regarding salvation, Elder Parley P. Pratt lamented in his autobiography the anxiety he felt about his sins and the method by which they could be remitted. For example, he complained to his father, saying, “He [the local Baptist minister, W. A. Scranton] tells us we must experience a mysterious, indefinite and indefinable something called religion before we can repent and be baptized acceptably. But, if we inquire how, or by what means we are to come at this experience, he cannot tell us definitely; but will tell us that it is the work of God in the soul; which he will accomplish in his own due time, for his own elect; and that we can do nothing acceptably til this is done. . . . They will require of me to relate *an experience*, and to tell of some time and place where I had already experienced that which I am only seeking for, and have not found.”²⁵

While the steps set forth for spiritual rebirth in this article were

clearly defined and simple by comparison, they were for those old enough to be accountable for their sins (see D&C 68:25, 27). Adding to this confusion about salvation, some religionists taught infant baptism; others taught a “baptism of believers,” those mature enough to have faith and be capable of repentance. Debates were even held on the question of baptism and, in particular, infant baptism, drawing large crowds with the arguments later published.²⁶ Joseph Smith in both articles 2 and 4 implied a rejection of infant baptism. In the former article the rejection of infant baptism was because children are born innocent and without the taint of original sin, and it is evident in the latter article that faith and repentance require more intellectual development than that of which an infant is capable.²⁷

Further, Joseph’s inclusion of the laying on of hands for giving the gift of the Holy Ghost was unique at that time for Christian churches. While the first three statements in this article of faith agree with some coreligionists on conversion and the mode of baptism, the fourth point, receipt of the gift of the Holy Ghost by the laying on of hands, provides a clear contrast. The Prophet Joseph declared that the gift of the Holy Ghost does not automatically follow baptism or hopeful prayers but is instead a priesthood ordinance conferred as it was in the New Testament (see Acts 8:16–18). Additionally, he taught that the gift of the Holy Ghost should be enjoyed in the latter days “as much as it was in the Apostles’ days” and that it is linked to the organization of the priesthood.²⁸ Part of the Protestant revolt against Catholicism was a rejection of the notion of priesthood authority held by a few and the acceptance of a “priesthood of all believers.”²⁹ Thus, the practice of *conferring* the gift of the Holy Ghost by the “laying on of hands” to all baptized believers contrasted with that of all other sects of that day.³⁰ Appropriately, Joseph clarified priesthood authority in the next article of faith.

AUTHORITY

Article 5: We believe that a man must be called of God, by prophecy, and by the laying on of hands by those who are in authority, to preach the Gospel and administer in the ordinances thereof.

Article 5 declares that the three antecedents necessary to authorize preaching the gospel and performing ordinances are: (1) an individual must be called prophetically, meaning by inspiration of the

Holy Spirit; (2) this calling must be certified by a particular priesthood ordinance, the laying on of hands; and (3) the individual announcing the calling to the one called must have authority from God. The requirement of priesthood authority separated Latter-day Saints from all Protestant churches that, in rebelling against the power of the Catholic Church, had eroded respect for its authority. The democratization of American Christianity, the expansion of popular sovereignty and egalitarian convictions, promoted self-anointed preachers and a “priesthood of all believers . . . religion of, by, and for the people.” By default, then, the only authority left for Protestants to claim was the Bible.³¹

Significantly, Joseph Smith implied in this article that he received authority by the “laying on of hands.” In fact, he recorded the visits of John the Baptist restoring the Aaronic Priesthood, and Peter, James, and John restoring the Melchizedek Priesthood to him and Oliver Cowdery (see Joseph Smith—History 1:68–72; D&C 13; 27:12–13; 128:20).

CHURCH ORGANIZATION

Article 6: We believe in the same organization that existed in the Primitive Church, namely, apostles, prophets, pastors, teachers, evangelists, and so forth.

Article 6 is an open-ended statement on organization that links the Church of Jesus Christ to the former-day Saints, those who lived during the first-century organization of Christ’s Church. Implied in the restoration of the primitive organization is the Church’s purpose as the location for the holders of priesthood authority to perform essential saving ordinances.

In this article of faith, the Prophet Joseph identified specific parts of the Apostolic Church that had been restored—namely, some of the offices by which the kingdom of God on earth is to be organized and in which those with properly conferred authority could act—adding “and so forth,” indicating that circumstances might render the need for an expansion of Church officers. This is in marked contrast, for example, to Alexander Campbell’s Disciples of Christ, the other main nineteenth-century restorationist tradition, which so carefully guarded congregational autonomy that no central church officers or organization existed.³²

In the Wentworth Letter, Joseph gave a brief overview of the Book of Mormon in which he linked the Church of the western continent to that of the eastern continent. He stated that the Savior “planted the Gospel here in all its fulness, and richness, and power, and blessing; that [the ancient American church] had Apostles, Prophets, Pastors, Teachers, and Evangelists; the same order, the same priesthood, the same ordinances, gifts, powers, and blessings.”³³ By listing the same offices the Apostle Paul had identified in Ephesians 4:11 in this article of faith, and referring to the Book of Mormon Church organization in the Wentworth Letter, the Prophet Joseph tied the latter-day Restoration to the ancient foundation of apostles and prophets, showing Christ at the head in both Palestine and the American continent (see Ephesians 2:20).³⁴

GIFTS OF THE SPIRIT

Article 7: We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, interpretation of tongues, and so forth.

In article 7, another open-ended article, the Prophet Joseph returned to the subject of the Holy Ghost, elaborating more on this third member of the Godhead. He listed several gifts of the Spirit that were part of the Apostolic Church: tongues, prophecy, revelation, visions, healing, and interpretation of tongues. The phrase “and so forth” at the end of the article indicates that the full complement of spiritual gifts discussed by Paul in 1 Corinthians 12–14 are also an integral part of the latter-day Church. This article affirms the Savior’s teaching that true believers would enjoy the “signs” of the true Church—the gifts of the Spirit (see Mark 16:15–18).

During religious camp meetings of the nineteenth century, such as the revival at Cane Ridge, Kentucky (1801), some participants manifested “signs,” such as uncontrollable weeping or crying, twitching, running in circles, and doglike barking.³⁵ Other Protestant sects were more circumspect in regard to spiritual manifestations. Some required the rehearsal of a conversion experience prior to baptism or church membership; however, others rejected this notion, arguing that faith was rational, or that “the age of those gifts has passed away” because gifts of the Spirit “were confined to the apostolic age, and to only a portion of the saints that lived in that age.”³⁶ Confusion about gifts of the Spirit caused eighteen-year-old Parley P.

Pratt to ask his Baptist preacher “what Jesus meant when he said, ‘these signs shall follow them that believe.’ He replied, that it meant these signs should follow the Apostles only.”³⁷ In sharp contrast to both those who believed in the nonbiblical signs manifest in camp meetings and those who believed that signs had ceased after the apostolic era, Joseph Smith taught: “We believe in the gift of the Holy Ghost being enjoyed now, as much as it was in the Apostles’ days . . . we also believe in prophecy, in tongues, in visions, and in revelations, in gifts, and in healings. . . . We believe in it [this gift of the Holy Ghost] in all its fulness, and power, and greatness, and glory . . . rationally, consistently, and scripturally, and not according to the wild vagaries, foolish notions and traditions of men.”³⁸

In Doctrine and Covenants section 46, the Prophet Joseph restated Paul’s point that gifts of the Spirit are given to bless the Church (see D&C 46:10). He went even further, declaring that while every man is given gifts by the Spirit of God, the Lord gives to the leaders of the Church of Jesus Christ *all* the gifts to bless and benefit the whole Church (see D&C 46:29; emphasis added).³⁹

SCRIPTURE

Article 8: We believe the Bible to be the word of God as far as it is translated correctly; we also believe the Book of Mormon to be the word of God.

Sola scriptura, the idea of relying on “the Bible alone” as the anchor of religious authority, and “biblical inerrancy,” the notion that the King James Version was “without error or mistake,” were strongly held beliefs in the early republic.⁴⁰ The balance, however, between biblical and traditional authority in the form of creeds and confessions was subject to debate.⁴¹ In contrast to these ideas, Joseph, having already mostly completed his translation of the Old and New Testaments, added an interesting caveat to Latter-day Saint belief in the Bible: “as far as it is translated correctly.” This statement probably alluded more to transmission than translation. His high regard for the Bible is evident in this comment: “He that can mark the power of Omnipotence, inscribed upon the heavens, can also see God’s own handwriting in the sacred volume [Bible]: and he who reads it oftenest will like it best, and he who is acquainted with it, will know the hand wherever he can see it; and when once discovered, it will not

only receive an acknowledgment, but an obedience to all its heavenly precepts."⁴²

The eighth article of faith encapsulates Joseph's declaration that the canon is not closed and that the prophetic office with the gifts of seership and revelation is functioning. It also states that both the Bible *and* the Book of Mormon are "the word of God."

CONTINUOUS REVELATION

Article 9: We believe all that God has revealed, all that He does now reveal, and we believe that He will yet reveal many great and important things pertaining to the Kingdom of God.

While the preachers of his day rejected the First Vision,⁴³ saying that "it was all of the devil, that there were no such things as visions or revelations in these days; that all such things had ceased with the apostles," Joseph announced that the heavens were again open because the kingdom of God was being established on the earth (Joseph Smith—History 1:21). The idea of personal dialogue with heaven, offensive to many of his era, pervades all that Joseph Smith did, beginning with the First Vision and including the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the inspired translation of the Bible, and the book of Abraham.⁴⁴ In the Wentworth Letter, Joseph shared both an account of his First Vision experience and also his visitation from Moroni with a description of the Book of Mormon plates and the Urim and Thummim, the medium by which he "translated the record by the gift and power of God"⁴⁵—concrete claims to new revelations and revelatory instruments.

Taken alone, this article of faith intimates only that the canon of scripture is open; however, the context of the Wentworth Letter, through specific references to heavenly visitations and an ancient instrument used by Old Testament seers, provides clear evidence of prophecy, seership, and revelation. This article is open-ended and expanding because of what it promises—continuing revelation. Through this principle, Joseph declared, additional light and knowledge continues to be revealed to prophets, seers, and revelators, even today.

ZION AND MILLENNIALISM

Article 10: We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built

upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory.

The beliefs expressed in article 10 address the religious and secular ideas of many Americans regarding the divine role of the United States. Many Americans felt that the United States was God's own country, was a "redeemer nation,"⁴⁶ and perhaps was even the stage for the Second Coming and the site of the New Jerusalem. Nathan Hatch proposes that the first generation of Americans may have anticipated the Second Coming of Christ more intensely than any generation since.⁴⁷ For example, Jonathan Edwards (1703–58) claimed, "There was a growing conviction among Americans that it was their own country that was especially chosen by God for great things."⁴⁸ From this point of view, the struggle for liberty and the rights of mankind in the American Revolution was religiously significant in that it "prepared the way" for the Second Coming of Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ "Conferences, sermons, books, plans and reforms of every sort" in the late 1820s and early 1830s indicated the high interest in the Millennium, and many, including some Latter-day Saints, thought its dawning was imminent.⁵⁰ William Miller, forerunner to the Seventh-day Adventists and leader of thousands, even calculated that the Second Coming would take place in 1843 (and then 1844).⁵¹ Joseph's statement, then, about the events leading up to the Millennium is very much a response to a hot topic of conversation in his day.⁵²

Regarding the events of this last dispensation and the events leading up to the Millennium, Joseph Smith prophesied there would be a literal gathering of Israel, a restoration of the ten tribes, and the building of Zion. The New Jerusalem would be built in America. While Latter-day Saints are premillennialists in that they believe that Christ will return to the earth at the beginning of the Millennium to usher in a peaceful reign for one thousand years, our belief has the flavor of postmillennialism because many things must be done by humankind with help from God before that great day can come.⁵³ Additionally, Joseph taught that paradise, similar to the Edenic state lost at the Fall of Adam, would be established on earth at this time.

CONCLUSION

It is apparent that Joseph Smith addressed many of the fundamental questions of Christianity—ideas that had divided Catholics

and, later, Protestants since the “falling away” and the death of the original Apostles (see 2 Thessalonians 2:3). These same divisions had continued to his day and even now still exist. The multiplication of sects in the new republic was based on differences of opinion and the freedom to both disagree and to start new churches. The Bible was available for each individual to read, the Enlightenment encouraged people to apply rational thinking to the study of scripture, and relatively unfettered religious freedom brought debate over ideas that had previously been accepted or enforced for centuries. Joseph was born at the precise time when freedom, skepticism, and doctrinal debate were part of American religious life. This time period was the perfect confluence of circumstances for the Restoration of the gospel. In the new era of religious liberty, which spawned innumerable new sects, Joseph Smith not only responded brilliantly to the great Christian questions but also put in place many of the foundational doctrines of the “restoration of all things” to which Latter-day Saints are anchored yet today.

NOTES

1. The term *Great Awakening* identifies the revivalism of the late 1730s and early 1740s, the era of Jonathan Edwards, George Whitefield, and Gilbert Tennent, among others. It involved a more evangelical Calvinism than the Puritan, Congregational, Baptist, and Presbyterian traditions. The Second Great Awakening had several different fronts, each with distinctive characteristics. John Wesley sent Francis Asbury and others to oversee the American Methodism of the Church of England. Particularly after the War for Independence, the Methodists under Asbury’s leadership took up itinerant preaching, binding their “settled” eastern centers to the western frontier.

In 1801 at the Cane Ridge, Kentucky, “camp meeting,” thousands, both the churched and the unchurched, listened to preachers, black and white, from different religions (Presbyterian, Baptist, and Methodist). Spontaneous responses to this revival included “the jerks, dancing, laughing, running, and ‘the barking exercise.’” The continuation of camp revival meetings, Methodist circuit riders, and Baptist farmer-preachers brought the good news throughout the United States.

In 1821, a more dignified revivalism began under Charles Finney in New York and continued in the major cities of the Northeast before moving to Ohio. Noll classifies Finney as the premier white American evangelist after Jonathan Edwards (Mark A.

- Noll, *America's God: From Jonathan Edwards to Abraham Lincoln* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002], 166–80, 564; Peter W. Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-First Century* [Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2002], 138–39).
2. The mix of so many religions, including traditional and upstart Protestant churches, the efforts of Methodists and Baptists to evangelize the American populace, and the proliferation of non-Calvinist and innovative churches such as Free Will Baptists, Shakers, Christians (Disciples of Christ), and Unitarian/Universalists, fed the fires of debate and conflict over beliefs (Peter W. Williams, *America's Religions: From Their Origins to the Twenty-first Century* [Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2002], 147–48; Noll, *America's God*, 567).
 3. For example, Joseph Smith Sr., a God-fearing man, stayed outside of religious institutions because he couldn't agree with their doctrines (Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* [Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1984], 36, 39). Joseph Smith's mother, Lucy Mack Smith, called herself a "seeker" (Lucy Mack Smith, *History of Joseph Smith by His Mother* [Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1901], 31, 34–36; see also Parley P. Pratt, *The Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt*, ed. Scot Facer Proctor and Maurine Jensen Proctor, rev. ed. [Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000], 13n9; and Nathan Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity* [New Haven, NJ: Yale University Press, 1989], 6–8).
 4. John Wentworth wrote a letter requesting that Joseph Smith write a document for Mr. George Bastow [Barstow], a friend of his, who was writing a history of New Hampshire. Although the book was published, Joseph Smith's manuscript was not in it. Joseph's "chapter" for the book was published in the *Times and Seasons*, March 1, 1842, 706, and in Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. B. H. Roberts, 2nd ed. rev. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1957), 4:535–41. See also John A. Widtsoe, *The Articles of Faith in Everyday Life* (Salt Lake City: Presiding Bishopric of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1951), 15; Edward J. Brandt, "The Origin and Importance of the Articles of Faith," in *Studies in the Scripture, Volume 2: The Pearl of Great Price*, ed. Robert L. Millet and Kent P. Jackson (Salt Lake City: Randall Book, 1985), 18.
 5. *Deists* (natural religion) believe in the existence of a God based on a commonsense approach to nature and reason rather than revelation. *Calvinism* (John Calvin) has five predominant characteristics: total depravity, unconditional election, limited atonement, irresistible grace, and perseverance of the saints. *Arminianism* (Jacobus Arminius) contains beliefs accepted by John Wesley's Methodists, who claim that God gave prevenient grace (grace before full

salvation) to all His children so that original sin could be overcome and all could choose God. Additionally, this belief included Christian perfection, meaning the ability for believers to be liberated from all sin in this life. *Lutheranism* (Martin Luther) is credited as the leader in the Protestant revolt against the authority of the pope. Lutherans rejected penance or “works righteousness” and instead embraced “salvation by grace alone.” *Universalism* was a response of ordinary people to the Calvinist teachings of the Great Awakening (1740). Its central belief was that all God’s children would ultimately be saved, a clear refutation of election (predestination) and limited atonement. *Restorationism* was a movement to restore the “true apostolic church,” a concern of the Puritans of the seventeenth century on down to both the Latter-day Saints and Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) in the nineteenth century.

6. Quoted in Donald Q. Cannon, “Reverend George Moore Comments on Nauvoo, the Mormons, and Joseph Smith,” *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 5, no. 1 (Spring 1982):11.
7. The Nicene Creed was formulated in the fourth century in response to theological disputes over the nature of Christ and the Godhead. It affirms the idea that the divinity of Christ is of the same substance as the divinity of God, thus guarding the unity of the Trinity. This creed is accepted by Roman Catholics and most Protestants. It also begins with the phrase “we” or “I believe.” This doctrine, primarily the work of Augustine, was declared in response to the radical views of Marcion and Arius regarding Christ. “It is important to note that no important Christian theologian has argued that there are three self-conscious beings in the godhead. On the contrary, Augustine’s favorite analogy for the triune god was one self-consciousness with its three distinctions of intellect, will, and the bond between them” (Van A. Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms* [New York City: Macmillan, 1964], s.v. “trinity”).
8. David Paulsen, “Are Mormons Trinitarians?” *Modern Reformation*, November/December 2003, 40.
9. *Original Sin* in the classical Christian tradition “refers to the universal and hereditary sinfulness of man since the fall of Adam.” In Augustine’s view, man inherits not only the tendency to sin but also the guilt of the Fall (Harvey, *Handbook of Theological Terms*, s.v. “sin, original”). *Total depravity* is a term characterizing the power of sin on man and “means that there is nothing in man that has not been infected by the power of sin” (Harvey, *Handbook of Theological Terms*, s.v. “depravity, total”). *Predestination* is the decree of God, whereby he hath for his own glory foreordained whatever comes to pass” (Charles Buck, *A Theological Dictionary* [Philadelphia: J. J. Woodward, 1844], s.v. “predestination”). Other doctrines associated with the Fall are *immaculate conception* and *infant damnation*.

10. Imputation is an important term in Protestant theology. Its legal meaning is "to reckon as" in terms of ascribing one man's guilt or innocence to another. In particular, Adam's sin and guilt was imputed to future generations, and Christ's righteousness was imputed to the faithful (Harvey, *Handbook of Theological Terms*, s.v. "imputation"; Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. "sin").
11. Joseph Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith: The Contemporary Accounts of the Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph*, comp. and ed. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon Cook (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 33, 39, 61. Spelling and capitalization have been modernized.
12. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 63.
13. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 33.
14. Smith, *Words of Joseph Smith*, 33, 79.
15. Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:443.
16. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:358. Also cited in *The Teachings of Joseph Smith*, ed. Larry E. Dahl and Donald Q. Cannon (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1997), 187.
17. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:388. Also cited in *Teachings of Joseph Smith*, 297.
18. Mathew Davis, writing to his wife, reported that Joseph Smith taught the following regarding humans as moral, responsible, and free agents: "Although it was foreordained he [mankind] should fall, and be redeemed, yet after the redemption it was not foreordained that he [mankind] should again sin. In the Bible a rule of conduct is laid down for him. . . . If he violates that law, he is to be punished for the deeds done in the body" (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:78–79).
19. T. Edgar Lyon, "Origin and Purpose of the Articles of Faith," *Instructor*, September 1952, 264. Charles Buck, an advocate of "free agency" as opposed to "free will," defined the latter term as an Arminian notion that "claims a part, yea the very turning point of salvation. . . . We need only certain helps or assistances, granted to men in common, to enable us to choose the path of life." On the other hand "free agency" requires "an almighty and invincible Power to renew them" because "our hearts [are] by nature wholly depraved" (Buck, *Theological Dictionary*, s.v. "free agency").
20. Universalism or universal redemption is suggested in the Greek word *apocatastis*, meaning that *all* will be saved (Harvey, *A Handbook of Theological Terms*, s.v. "apocatastis").
21. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 27, 36.
22. To appreciate the radical nature of this pronouncement, one must

- realize that “only fringe theologians held that humans assisted in their own salvation” (Noll, *America’s God*, 28).
23. Joseph Smith believed “that a man is a moral, responsible, free agent” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:78–79). Further, Joseph Smith observed that “the devil could not compel mankind to do evil. . . . Those who resisted the Spirit of God, would be liable to be led into temptation. . . . God would not exert any compulsory means, and the devil could not” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:358).
 24. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 170; see also E. Brooks Holifield, *Theology in America: Christian Thought from the Age of the Puritans to the Civil War* (New Haven, NJ: Yale, 2003), 42.
 25. Pratt, *Autobiography*, 10–11.
 26. Robert Richardson, *Memoirs of Alexander Campbell* (Germantown, TN: Religious Book Service, 1897), 2:17–29.
 27. There were two prominent philosophies defending infant baptism by sprinkling: (1) because of original sin infants must be cleansed in case of premature death; and (2) baptism is equated with the Old Testament covenant of circumcision; thus, it is practiced when an infant is eight days old. Moroni 8:5–26 calls infant baptism a “gross error” and “solemn mockery before God.” Repentance and baptism are for those who are accountable. In *Doctrine and Covenants* 68:25, 27, the age of accountability is declared to be eight years.
 28. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:26–27; see also “Editorial,” *Times and Seasons*, June 15, 1842, 823.
 29. This phrase is basic to the Protestant Reformation. It is a rejection of the necessity of priesthood authority for administering ordinances (sacraments) and of priesthood holders as a special class. Instead, public ministry was a vocation. Some sects completely abolished any distinction between clergy and lay members (Harvey, *Handbook of Theological Terms*, s.v. “priesthood of all believers”).
 30. In general Protestant belief, the “Holy Spirit . . . is given to man with faith in Christ and is, therefore, not a natural possession but a gift empowering the faithful to live free from the compulsion to sin” (Harvey, *Handbook of Theological Terms*, s.v. “Spirit—Holy Spirit”).
 31. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 6, 12, 22–24, 34, 43, 69, 128.
 32. David Edwin Harrell Jr., “Christian Primitivism and Modernization in the Stone-Campbell Movement,” in *The Primitive Church in the Modern World*, ed. Richard T. Hughes (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois, 1995), 111.
 33. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:538.
 34. None of the Protestant sects claimed the restoration of the

- priesthood, although a few individuals claimed to be prophets. Robert Matthias, who claimed to be a literal descendant of the Apostle Matthias, visited Joseph Smith in Kirtland. Joseph listened to his teachings and pronounced him a false prophet (Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:304–7). See also Richard H. Brodhead, “Prophets in America, ca. 1830: Emerson, Nat Turner, Joseph Smith,” *Journal of Mormon History* 29, no. 1 (Spring 2003): 42–65; Paul E. Johnson and Sean Wilentz, *Kingdom of Matthias* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 1994).
35. “At the time, outsiders called these actions ‘exercises.’ Today scholars call them trances, or involuntary motor behavior, a situation in which the brain loses control of the muscles under extreme stress” (Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* [Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003], 184).
 36. Campbell, “Address to the Readers of the Christian Baptist, No. IV,” *Christian Baptist*, March 1, 1824; Campbell, “Essays on the Work of the Holy Spirit in the Salvation of Men, No. VII,” *Christian Baptist*, February 7, 1825.
 37. Pratt, *Autobiography*, 12.
 38. Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:26–27; “Editorial,” *Times and Seasons*, June 15, 1842.
 39. Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:163–65.
 40. Other individuals in nineteenth-century America produced new translations of the scriptures; for example, Alexander Campbell and Noah Webster, but neither translation achieved widespread fame or use.
 41. Noll, *America’s God*, 373; Holifield, *Theology in America*, 29, 260, 275, 344–45, 379.
 42. Smith, *History of the Church*, 2:14.
 43. Alexander Campbell’s response to Joseph Smith’s claims is found in “Delusion: An Analysis of the Book of Mormon; with an Examination of Its Internal and External Evidences, and a Refutation of Its Pretences to Divine Authority,” *Millennial Harbinger*, February 1831. Bushman makes the point that the First Vision is called that because it is the first of many visions Joseph Smith received (*Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 56).
 44. Terryl L. Givens, *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture That Launched a New World Religion* (New York City: Oxford University Press, 2002), 217. This view of revelation was at the forefront of the conflict in Missouri. In “The Manifesto of the Mob,” Missourians deplored the Mormons’ pretensions “to hold personal communication and converse face to face with the Most High God; to receive communications and revelations direct from heaven” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 1:374–75).

45. Smith, *History of the Church*, 4:537.
46. Williams, *America's Religions*, 206, 226; Holifield, *Theology in America*, 77.
47. Hatch, *The Democratization of American Christianity*, 184. Alexander Campbell, another nineteenth-century restorationist, anticipated that a return to Christian unity and the ancient order found in the New Testament Church would usher in the millennial era. A major focus of his monthly journal, the *Millennial Harbinger*, was to promote the restoration conditions necessary for its beginning. Through the work of humankind, an earthly millennial era would precede the return of Christ, which would then bring about the resurrection of the dead, final judgment, and creation of a new heaven and earth.

Earlier American theologians also wrote about the Millennium. For example, John Cotton in the seventeenth century believed that the world stood on the verge of a millennial age; however, it was to be a spiritual coming of Christ, not His final return, using magistrates and ministers to build the earthly New Jerusalem. Cotton Mather, in the early eighteenth century, also believed in an earthly millennium, inaugurated by Christ, that would bring about the resurrection of the Saints destined to rule with Him and destroy the earth by fire before transforming it. Then the New Jerusalem would descend as a material but ethereal city, hovering in the air above the restored earthly Jerusalem. The end of the Millennium would climax with Armageddon and the second resurrection, which would include the righteous and the wicked.

In the mid-eighteenth century, Jonathan Edwards described the millennial era in terms of excellence, proportion, and beauty. It would be an era characterized by one church, an orderly society, and agreement on the important doctrines, all of which would precede the return of Christ (Holifield, *Theology in America*, 49, 77–78, 123–24, 300). Some contemporary biblical commentators mentioned a literal gathering of Israel in their expositions on Isaiah (Matthew Henry, *An Exposition on the Old and New Testaments with Practical Remarks and Observations* [New York: Robert Carther & Brothers, 1853], 4:70, under Isaiah 11:4).

48. Williams, *America's Religions*, 206.
49. Jon Butler, Grant Wacker, and Randall Balmer, *Religion in American Life: A Short History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 149.
50. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 170; Hatch, *Democratization of American Christianity*, 185.
51. Williams, *American Religions*, 229–30.
52. In fact, several young men came to visit Joseph Smith on February 12, 1843, evidently asking about William Miller's prediction that

the Second Coming would occur April 3, 1843. Joseph preached them “quite a sermon” and told them “many more things would take place before Christ would come” (Smith, *History of the Church*, 5:271–72).

53. Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism*, 170.